THE TINNEVELLY SHANARS

A SKETCH

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THEIR RELIGION, AND THEIR MORAL CONDITION

AND CHARACTERISTICS, AS A CASTE:

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO

THE FACILITIES AND HINDRANCES TO THE PROGRESS

OF CHRISTIANITY AMONGST THEM.

By

THE REV. R. Caldwell, B.A.

Missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, at Edeyengoody, Tinnevelly.

MADRAS

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From time to time various published Reports have communicated a considerable amount of information respecting the history and the internal economy, the progress and prospects of the Missions in Tinnevelly. But notwithstanding those Reports, persons residing in England cannot have a very distinct idea either of the nature of missionary work in this province, or of the nature of the difficulties connected with it, and the proportionate value of the results that have been obtained, without more specific information respecting the characteristics and condition of the inhabitants in their heathen state. I therefore have thought that a sketch of the religious and moral condition of the heathen population, with special reference to those castes and classes to which the majority of our converts originally belonged, and amongst which we continue to have most influence ; with observations on their social condition and mental characteristics, in so far as they affect their moral condition and prospects, may enable some persons to form a more distinct idea of the peculiarities of this sphere of missionary labour, and tend to excite them to a more practical interest in it.

In attempting to describe the religious or social condition of any class of people, it is a necessary preliminary to state who and what they are, and in what position they stand relatively to other classes. The castes to which the greater number of the members of our native congregations belong, form the bulk of the population in the south of Tinnevelly ; and probably comprise a majority of the entire population of the province. Of the Christians the most numerous class is composed of Shanars, inclusive of the various sub-divisions and off-shoots of the caste. The next consists of Pariars and Pullers, the hereditary slaves of the wealthier classes ; and last in the order of number follow the Maravers, with a still smaller proportion of Vellalers, Naicks, Retties, and other high castes. In classifying the native Christians of

this neighbourhood according to their numerical order, I very nearly exhibit the proportion which the various castes, Mahomedans excepted, bear to the total amount of the population in the majority of the missionary districts. Consequently, an acquaintance with the prevailing characteristics of the classes I have mentioned in their heathen state will be found to throw much light on the condition of the native Christians.

As the Shanars are the most numerous class amongst the heathens in the south-eastern parts of Tinnevelly, and form by far the largest body in connection with the Missions, and as they have contributed more than any other class to the formation of those peculiarities of character and belief, which pervades the mass of the people in these parts and distinguish them from the inhabitants of the northern districts of Tinnevelly as well as from those of the Northern Carnatic in general, many of the remarks I have to make will refer chiefly to the Shanars; and sometimes, to avoid circumlocution, I shall include the whole of the lower classes of the local population under that predominating name.

The caste of Shanars occupies a middle position between the Vellalers and their Pariar slaves. Their hereditary occupation is that of cultivating and climbing the palmyra palm, the juice of which they boil into a coarse sugar. This is one of the those occupations which are restricted by Hindu usage to members of a particular caste; whilst agriculture and trade are open to all. The majority of Shanars confine themselves to the hard and weary labour appointed to their race; but a considerable number have become cultivators of the soil, as land owners, or farmers, or are engaged in trade. They may in general be described as belonging to the highest division of the lower classes, or the lowest of the middle classes; poor, but not paupers; rude and unlettered, but by many degrees removed from a savage state. In the absence of historical statements and monuments, it is impossible to gain

satisfactory information respecting the origin and history of the caste. Such particulars as I have been able to ascertain were picked up amongst the ashes of well-nigh extinct traditions.

I have met with traditions to the effect that the Shanars are emigrants from the northern coasts of Ceylon; where the same or a similar caste still exists, bearing a grammatical and intelligible form of the same name, "Shandrar," of which "Shanar" is etymologically a corruption. It is also tolerably certain that the Ilavers and Teers, (i.e., "Cingalese" and "Islanders,") who cultivate the cocoanut palm in Travancore, are descendants of Shandrar colonists from Ceylon. There are traces of a common origin amongst them all: "Shanar," for instance, being a title of honor amongst the Travancore Ilavers. It is stated in the traditions to which I have alluded, that the Shanars who inhabit Tinnevelly came from the neighbourhood of Jaffna, in Ceylon; that one portion of them, the class now called "Nadans," (lords of the soil) entered Tinnevelly by way of Ramnad, bringing with them the seed-nuts of the Jaffna palmyra, the best in the east; and appropriating, or obtaining from, the ancient Pandya princes, (as the most suitable region for the cultivation of the palmyra,) the sandy waste lands of Manad in the south-east of Tinnevelly, over which to the present day they claim rights of seignorage, and that the other portion of the emigrants, esteemed a lower division of the caste, came by sea to the south of Travancore, where vast numbers of them are still found; and from whence, having but little land of their own, they have gradually spread themselves over Tinnevelly, on the invitation of the Nadans and other proprietors of land; who, without the help of their poorer neighbours, as climbers, could derive but little profit from their immense forests of palmyra. Some of these emigrations have probably taken place since the Christian era. And it is asserted by the Syrian Christians of Travancore that one portion of the tribe, the Ilavers, were brought over from Ceylon by *their* ancestors, for the cultivation of the cocoanut palm. It must not, however, be supposed that any

tradition represents the Shanar race as being Cingalese in the distinct sense of the term. The traditions of the Buddhistical Cingalese seem to connect them nationally, as well as religiously, with Behar and consequently with the Brahmanical tribes. The Shanars, on the contrary, though probably emigrants from Ceylon, are Hindus not of the Brahmanical, but of the Tamil or aboriginal race; the inhabitants of the northern coast of Ceylon being themselves Tamulians – the descendants, either of early Tamil colonists, or of the marauding bands of Cholas who are said repeatedly to have made irruptions into Ceylon both before and after the Christian era.

The Shanars of Ceylon, who are considered as forming the parent stock, now occupy a more respectable position in the social scale than any of the off-shoots of the caste. But it is probable that they have risen in civilization through the example and influence of the higher castes amongst whom they live, and that the Shanars of Tinnevelly, forming the bulk of the population in their various settlements and having few dealings with any other class, may be considered as retaining their original condition, and as still representing the religious and social state of the entire family prior to its separation and dispersion.

In describing the religious belief and moral condition of the Shanars, and other inferior castes in Tinnevelly connected with them or influenced by them, it is not my intention to refer to those prejudices, passions, and practices which characterize Shanars and Pariars in common with all unregenerate men. They are " by nature children of wrath," and have inherited a corrupted nature " even as others : " consequently, in the love of evil and the dislike of good, in weakness of principle and strength of passion, we shall find the main features of their character exemplified wherever fallen men are found. I shall restrict my observations to those particulars in which their religious and moral condition appear to differ from that of other classes of people in this or other countries. "All like sheep have gone astray;" but "

every one," it is said " hath turned to his own way:" and some advantage and interest may be found in considering the characteristics of the very peculiar phase of error which obtains in this province.

I. THE RELIGION OF THE SHANARS

It does not throw much light upon the Shanar religion to describe it as a form of Hinduism. It is no doubt equally deserving of the name with most of the religions of India ; but as those religions are not only multiform, but mutually opposed, the use of the common term " Hinduism " is liable to mislead. It is true that certain general theosophic ideas are supposed to pervade all the Hindu systems , and that theoretical unity is said to lurk beneath practical diversity. But this representation, though in some degree correct , is strictly applicable only to the mystical or metaphysical systems. Practically, the Hindu religions have few ideas and but few practices in common ; and the vast majority of their votaries would be indignant at the supposition that their own religion, and the detested heresy of their opponents, are after all one and the same. Be this as it may, Missionaries have to deal , not with philosophical analogies or dead antiquities , but with the living and active religions of the heathen world. Their business is with the superstitions and practices of the heathen amongst whom they live , and with the opinions and local legends on which those superstitions are founded , according to the statement of the people themselves. Acting on this principle, Missionaries cannot consider Hinduism as one homogenous religion. The term, " Hinduism," like the geographical term " India ," is an European generalization unknown to the Hindus. The Hindus themselves call their religions by the name of the particular deity they worship , as " *Siva bhakti*," " *Vishnu bhakti* ," & c. The only exceptions are in the case of some of the un-Brahmanical lower classes, such as the Shanars , who, though they

hold a different faith, have not philosophy enough to invent a distinctive name for it. Europeans popularly imagine that the temples and images and processions which they so frequently see belong to one and the same system. But the fact is that in many cases they belong to totally different religions ; and the deities that preside over each religion are , in the estimation of the votaries of the rival divinity, emanations of the principle of evil, beings who are and ever have been at war with the true deity, or at best his unwilling servants, and whose worship is sin. It may be allowed to be abstractly probable that most of the religions of India have sprung from a common origin. And occasionally we meet with a wandering devotee or book-learned mystic who asserts that all deities , whether Brahmanical or not , are one ; that is , as he appears to understand it , all are alike objectively unreal. But such ideas obtain little sympathy amongst the people at large, whose religion is one of observances and distinctive signs, and with whom the beauty of an observance is its restriction to a particular locality and its contrariety to rival observances. I have thought it necessary to make this preliminary observation, because many seem to imagine that the nations of India possess but one religion ; that the character of the various Hindu races , their superstitions and prejudices, are every where , the same ; that the best way to propagate Christianity in one part of India must be the best way every where ; and that the Missionary has every where the same arguments to refute , and the same difficulties to encounter. Many a person who has derived his ideas of Hinduism from some particular school of Hindu metaphysics , or from the doctrines and rites considered as orthodox in a particular locality, has imagined himself acquainted with the whole subject. Whereas, he has become acquainted with only one phase of Hinduism ; and in other parts of India, amongst races of a different origin and speaking a different tongue, would probably find the same system either quite unknown, or considered heretical. For instance, who has not heard of Vedantism ? and what Missionary coming out of India has not felt some misgivings as to the result of his first controversy with

Vedantist Brahmans? Yet in Tinnevelly, amongst a population of more than 8,00,000 souls, I think I may assert with safety that there are not to be found eight individuals who know so much of Vedantism as may be picked up by an European student in an hour from the perusal of any European tractate on the subject. And though I have no doubt but that some persons may be found in Tinnevelly who profess the system, I have not yet *myself* met with, or heard of a single person who is supposed to profess it as a whole, much less understand it. On the other hand there are certain facts and truths proper to Christianity, such as the doctrine of our redemption by sacrifice, which are peculiarly offensive to some of the Brahmanical sects, and are supposed to be offensive to the Hindu mind every where, but which convey no offence in Tinnevelly; where the shedding of blood in sacrifice and the substitution of life for life are ideas with which the people are familiar.

It is necessary to remember that many contradictory creeds are denoted by the common term Hinduism, in order to understand the religious condition of the lower castes in Tinnevelly. The Shanars, though not of the Brahmanical or Sanscrit-speaking race, are as truly Hindus as are any class in India. Nevertheless their connection with the Brahmanical systems of dogmas and observances, commonly described in the mass as Hinduism, is so small that they may be considered as votaries of a different religion. It may be true that the Brahmans have reserved a place in their Pantheon, or Pandemonium, for local divinities and even for aboriginal demons; but in this the policy of conquerors is exemplified, rather than the discrimination of philosophies, or the exclusiveness of honest believers.

I shall now endeavour to illustrate the religious condition of the Shanars by giving some account of their creed and observances.

1. THE SHANAR IDEAS RESPECTING THE DIVINE BEING

It is not easy to determine whether it is part of their religious system, or not, to believe that there is a God, the creator of all things and the ruler of the world. I think the most that can be said is that there are traces amongst them of a vague, traditionary belief in the existence of God. Christianity has been embraced by so many persons of this class, and has become so extensively known, that unmixed, unmodified heathenism can now rarely be met with amongst them. When Christians and heathens live together in the same village, and the children of both classes attend the same school, Christian expressions and even Christian ideas become common property. The names, titles, and attributes of God of which Christians are accustomed to speak, are not unfrequently transferred to the use of some heathen divinity, or some old, indistinct abstraction; and on entering into conversation with the more intelligent and less bigotted heathens, you will find them representing as entertained and confessed by every one naturally, truths which they themselves or their parents learned from their Christian neighbours. Hence, though almost every Shanar you meet will more or less explicitly acknowledge the existence of one supreme God and His creation and cognizance of all things, it may justly be affirmed that this acknowledgment springs from the silent influence or implicit reception of the Christian truths which have become so widely known. In just the same manner some of our European philosophers purloin from Christianity a few elementatary truths which man's unaided intellect never did or could discover, and style them "Natural Religion."

It is useless to seek for traces of a belief in the existence of God in the literature of the Shanars; for that, if a few doggered rhymes deserve the name, is either of Brahmanical origin and therefore foreign, or it is confined to the recital of the praises of demons, the power of incantations, and the virtues of medicines.

In searching for traces of an original belief in the existence of God, the only information I could obtain was found in the unprompted talk of old people in villages into which Christianity has not penetrated. The traces I have observed are such as follows : " In their appeals to God, as knowing the truth of what they say, and in proverbial expressions, the term by which God is generally denoted signifies neither a particular divinity, nor a demon, but is a common term signifying " Ruler " or " Lord " and if you ask who this Lord is, or what is his name, they seem puzzled to know what to reply. Again, when sudden punishment overtakes a wicked man, it is generally attributed not to a devil, or to any divinity bearing a proper name, but to " the Lord ." Monstrous births and prodigies are also ascribed to his will, with an implied, but so far as I know, unexpressed acknowledgment that he is also the author of the ordinary course of nature. When a child dies, they may sometimes be heard abusing him whom they call " Ruler " and " Lord " for his want of mercy or blindness is slaying their child ; and hence it may be supposed, by a charitable construction, that they consider him as the author of life. These scanty facts exhibit the only traces I have met with of a belief in the existence of God, apart from Brahmanical legends, and the influence of Christianity. Wherever Christianity has been introduced , this so important article of belief becomes speedily a settled element in even the heathen's creed. The mind, not pre-occupied by an opposing tradition, at once gives its assent to a doctrine so pre-eminently reasonable. When he has to choose between the creation of the world by a supreme mind and its uncaused eternal existence, even the untutored Shanar does not hesitate long.

The Shanars nominally acknowledge as deities some of the most renowned of the gods of the Brahmanical mythologies ; but generally speaking they know only their names, and a few popular myths in which they figure as heroes. And, with the exception of one solitary case I have not discovered the least vestige of their acquaintances with the Pan-theistic notion, so

popular with the Tamil poets, that God is an all-pervading essence without qualities or acts.

Notwithstanding their traditional use of the name of one God, it may be asserted that, practically the Shanars are destitute of the belief in God's existence, and that their only real faith is in demonolatry. They do not seem to have received from their fathers any distinct tradition of God's creation of the world or government of it. They make no allusion to His Omniscience, except when " an oath for confirmation is an end of all strife." They are never heard to " speak of His wondrous works, or of the glorious honor of His Majesty." Literally, they are " without God in the world." This beautiful world, so full of divine philosophy, is to them a mere mass of dead matter, without a mind or a heart.

Hence, it is that when heathen Shanars come in contact with Christians, the doctrine of the real existence of a Supreme Being and His actual superintendence of the world, is one of the first things which strike them with surprise. It sounds new in their ears; but they rarely oppose it, and generally, as has been said, learn to appropriate it. Hence, also the line of argument frequently adopted by unlettered Native Christians in their intercourse with the heathens, which at first sight seems so illogical, has some practical force in it, considering the persons to whom it is addressed. Their argument is after this sort: —there is a God and all things have been made by God, and therefore the Christian religion is the only true one. I have often been present when this argument was used; and the heathens seemed as much puzzled for an answer, as the Christian was triumphant.

2. THE SHANARS IDEAS, RESPECTING A FUTURE STATE

It sometimes happens, however inconsistently, that heathen tribes who are ignorant of the existence of a great first cause, or imperfectly persuaded of His existence, believe in the life of the soul after death. But in the case of the Shanars I have not observed this inconsistency. So far as I have been able to learn, it does not appear to me that belief in the conscious existence of every human soul after death, much less belief in a state of rewards and punishments hereafter, forms any part of the Shanar creed. The only thing bordering upon this belief which I have noticed is the popular superstition upon which demonolatry is founded. When a person has died a sudden, untimely, or violent death, especially if he had been remarkable for crimes or violence of temper in his life time, it is frequently supposed that his spirit haunts the place where his body lies, or wanders to and fro in the neighbourhood. If this spirit were simply supposed to be the soul or disembodied mind of the deceased, without any material alteration in its attributes, the idea would clearly correspond with the European superstition respecting ghosts, a superstition founded on the Christian doctrine of the immortality of the soul. But in the Shanar creed the annihilation of the soul or thinking principle, when the body dies, is the general rule, and its transformation into a ghost is only an occasional exception, limited to particular cases; and besides, the Shanar spirit is not so much considered the ghost of the deceased as a newly-born demon, an aerification and amplification of the bad features of the deceased person's character, a goblin which, with the acquisition of super-human power, has acquired super-human malignity. This belief sometimes takes the more Brahmanical shape of a re-animation and spiritualization of the dead body itself by a demon; but in its purely Shanar form it may be considered as leading to the supposition that the Shanars originally possessed some obscure notions respecting the separate existence of the soul after death, of which this is the only remaining trace. They have it is true, a primitive Tamil word

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denoting "a spirit" or ghost; but the word which denotes the soul, according to the Christian or philosophical meaning of the term, is a Sanscrit one, belonging consequently to the terminology of a different religion; and that word is little if at all used or known, except by those who are familiar with the phraseology adopted by Christians.

Through the prevalence of Brahmanical ideas and rites amongst the higher classes of the Tamil people, and the partial imitation of the usages of those classes by the wealthier Shanars, a few things are occasionally observed which might be mistaken for traces of a belief in the immortality of the soul. For instance, the ceremonies performed in behalf of the dead are connected with the belief in their continued existence. But such ceremonies are performed only by a few of the more aspiring Shanars, who like to imitate the manners of the higher castes; and the Brahmanical origin of the ceremonies themselves is historically known. Again, some of the wealthier and more educated Shanars may appear to hold the Brahmanical doctrine of the transmigration of souls; but their belief in it is merely nominal, and only exhibited in half-earnest. For instance, when a man is about to utter an enormous lie, he will say with a knowing look, "if what I am going to tell be not true, may I be born a maggot." The belief goes no further; and expressions of this kind are not heard amongst the mass of unchanged, unsophisticated Shanars, whose ideas of the existence of the soul after death have not taken even so crude a shape. In so far, therefore, as the psychology of the Shanars can be ascertained, it may be asserted as their opinion that in all ordinary cases when a man dies, he has ceased to be; there is an end of his hopes and fears; and every thing that he was is dissipated in the smoke of his incremation, or resolved into the earth in which is laid.

The consequence of obliterating the doctrine of a future state from the creed of reducing man to a merely material condition, and precluding the belief of his being called to account

for his actions hereafter, may readily be conceived by the Christian creed.

So common and so deeply rooted amongst the Shanars is the persuasion that at death, the whole of man dies, that it is one of the most serious obstacles in the way of their sincere reception and consistent profession of Christianity, and their growth in grace; and not unfrequently ; when their faith is tried by some unusual disappointment or calamity, and found wanting, this hereditary materialism proves the cause of their relapse into demonolatry. To every consoling argument they mutter in reply ; " who has seen heaven ? who has seen hell ? "

3. THE SHANAR WORSHIP OF DEVILS

Hitherto, the mind of the Shanars has appeared to be a dreary void, a desert in which no trace of religious ideas is found. I have now to show how this desert has been peopled by a gloomy imagination with visions of goblins and demons.

When Missionaries allude to the devil-worship prevalent in Tinnevelly, some persons seem to suppose that by the term " devils " we mean the gods worshipped by the people; and that we style them " devils " because their claims are supposed to have been the inventors of the religions of the heathen world. It is thought that we use the term in a controversial sense; and I have known our use of it attributed to religious rancour and construed into an intentional insult to the people. But the fact is, that in describing the *positive* portion of the religion of the Shanars as devil-worship, the word used is not only the most appropriate one we know, but it exactly corresponds with the term used by the Shanars themselves. In so far as they recognize the existence of God, they appear to consider Him as good and just ; and as there are some good points in the character of most of the Brahmanical deities, they style them also good spirits, or gods. But the demons worshipped by themselves and their forefathers are considered to be beings of unmixed malignity – bona fide fiends; and it is supposed to be necessary to worship them simply and solely because they are malignant. Consequently, demonolatry, or devil-worship, is the only term by which the religion of the Shanars can be accurately described. Whatever belief any of them may have in the existence of God, they appear to think that, being good, He does not need to be appeased; and even such of the Brahmanical deities as have obtained a place in their esteem are honored merely with an annual festival and the compliment of a passing bow. But their own devils, being spirits of a very different temper, jealous, watchful, and vindictive, are worshipped with the earnestness and assiduity of a real belief. The Shanars, especially

the more wealthy of them, have no objection to be considered worshippers of the gods of the Brahmans on high days and holidays. The worship of Subrahmanya, the second son of Siva, having been popular in Peninsular India, from an early period, the majority of the Shanars symbolize with the higher castes by attending the annual festival to his honor at Trichendoor, Shasta also, the Hari-hara-putra of the Brahmans, and rather a demon-king than a divinity, being guardian of boundaries and protector of paddy fields, is worshipped to a considerable extent in his official relations. But in those extensive tracts of country where the Shanars form the bulk of the population, and the cultivation of the palmyra is the ordinary employment of the people, the Brahmanical deities rarely receive any notice; and the appearance on the foreheads of a few of the more devout, or of the wealthier class, of a streak of holy ashes, the distinctive mark of Sivism, is the only trace or sign of the influence of legitimate Brahmanism which one can see. Demonism in one shape or another may be said to rule the Shanars with undisputed authority. The worship of their own demons forms the religion not of a passing holiday only, but of their every-day life; and is that which governs their minds, sways their wills, and influences their character, and to which they invariably flee in sickness and loss.

A few of the demons are forms of Cali, connected with a debased and comparatively modern development of the Brahmanical system itself; and, as such, they are known by a different name, " Ammen," or mother, and their worship is marked by some distinctive peculiarities. It is performed not by every one who pleases, as devil-worship is, but by a particular class of Soodra priests. A large majority however of the devils are of purely Shanar or Tamil origin, and totally unconnected with Brahmanism.

I shall now mention some particulars illustrative of the opinions entertained respecting these demons and the peculiarities of their worship, as it exists at present. I shall not attempt to enter

upon a minute description of the system, or exemplify it by specific illustrations ; but shall confine myself to the more general object of furnishing the reader with a sketch of its salient points and more prominent characteristics, and helping him to form an estimate of its tendencies and effects. My description will therefore apply rather to the genus "demon" than to any demon in particular – rather to the points in which all diabolical rites agree than to local or incidental varieties.

As has already been mentioned, the majority of the devils are supposed to have originally been human beings ; and the class of persons most frequently supposed to have been transformed into devils are those who had met with a sudden or violent death , especially if they had made themselves dreaded in their life time. Devils may in consequence be either male or female, of low or high caste, of Hindu or foreign lineage . Their character and mode of life seem to be little if at all modified by differences of this nature. All are powerful , malicious and interfering ; and all are desirous of bloody sacrifices and frantic dances. The only differences apparent are in the structure of the temple or image built to their honor , the insignia worn by their priests, the minutiae of the ceremonies observed in their worship, the preference of the sacrifice of a goat by one, a hog by another , and a cock by a third, or in the addition of libations or ardent spirits for which Pariar demons stipulate. As for their abode, the majority of the devils are supposed to dwell in trees ; some wander to and fro , and go up and down , in uninhabited wastes ; some skulk in shady retreats. Sometimes they take up their abode in houses ; and it often happens that a devil will take a fancy to dispossess the soul and inhabit the body of one of his votaries ; in which case the personal consciousness of the possessed party ceases, and the screaming , gesticulating, and pythonizing are supposed to be the demon's acts.

Every malady however trivial is supposed by the more superstitions to be inflicted by a devil, and a sacrifice is necessary

for its removal; but the unusual severity or continuance of any disease, or the appearance of symptoms which are not recorded in the physician's shastra are proofs of possession of which no Shanar can entertain any doubt. The medical science of so rude a people not being very extensive, cases of unquestionable possession are of frequent occurrence. When a woman is heard to laugh and weep alternately, without any adequate cause, or shriek and look wild when no snake or wild beast can be perceived, what Shanar can suppose any thing but a devil to be the cause of the mischief? The Native doctor, himself a Shanar, is sent for to give his advice. He brings his library with him, (he can't read, but it is all safe in his memory,) - his " complete science of medicine in one hundred stanzas, as revealed by the sage Agastya to his disciple Pulastya;" but in vain he recites his prescriptions, in vain he coins hard words. As no description of hysterical complaints is contained in his authorities, what can he do but decide that a devil has taken possession of the woman, and recommend that a sacrifice be offered to him forthwith, with a cloth and a white fowl to the doctor? Sometimes the possession takes the shape of a stroke of the sun, epilepsy or catalepsy, a sudden fright, mania, or the vertigo and stupor caused by an overflow of bile. But any ordinary disease, when it seems incurable, and the patient begins to waste away, is pronounced a possession.

Sometimes the friends are not desirous of expelling the evil spirit all at once, but send for music, get up a devil-dance, and call upon the demon to prophesy. This is particularly the case when some member of the family has long been sick, and they are anxious to know what is to be the result of the sickness, and are wishing and waiting for a demon's visit.

If they desire to expel the devil, there is no lack of moving ceremonies and powerful incantations, each of which has been tried and found successful innumerable times. If the devil should prove an obstinate one and refuse to leave, charm they never so wisely, his retreat may generally be hastened by the

vigorous application of a slipper or a broom to the shoulders of the possessed person, the operator taking care to use at the same time the most scurrilous language he can think of. After a time the demoniae loses his downcast, sullen look. He begins to get angry and writhe about under the slippering, and at length cries, " I go, I go." They then ask him his name, and why he came there. He tells them he is such and such a devil, whom they have neglected ever so long, and he wants an offering; or he calls himself by the name of some deceased relative, who, as they now learn for the first time, has become a demon. As soon as the demon consents to leave, the beating ceases and not unfrequently immediate preparations are made for a sacrifice, as a compensation to his feelings for the ignominy of the exorcism. The possessed person now awakes as from a sleep, and appears to have no knowledge of any thing that has happened.

These possessions are not restricted to professed heathens. I have met with several cases amongst persons who had recently placed themselves under Christian instruction, and a few amongst native Christians of longer standing, in which all the ordinary symptoms of possession, as recognized by Shanars, were developed. This corresponds, I believe, with the experience of most of the Missionaries in Tinnevelly. The relatives in such cases do not think themselves at liberty to attempt to exorcise the demon in the usual way. Accordingly the Missionaries have sometimes been sent for to try the effect of European remedies; and where they have interfered, have generally succeeded to the people's satisfaction, as well as to their own. Some of the possessions yield by degrees to moral influences and alternatives; but in the majority of cases the most effectual exorcism is – tartar emetic.

I do not say that real demoniacal possessions never occur in heathen countries. Where Satan rules without opposition, and where belief in the reality and frequency of possessions is so general, it is natural to suppose that there must be some foundation for the belief. Popular delusions generally include a fact.

My mind is perfectly open to receive evidence on the subject; and considering the number of astonishing cases that almost every Native says he has been told of by those who have seen them, I had hoped some day to witness something of the kind myself. But I have not yet had an opportunity of being present where praeternatural symptoms were exhibited; though I have sought for such an opportunity for nearly twelve years, the greater part of the time in a devil-worshipping community. This is the experience, so far as I have heard, of all British and American Missionaries with the exception of one dubious case. Our German brethren seem to have been more fortunate.

The demons especially show their power in cases of possession; but they are frequently contented with inflicting minor injuries. Not only the failure of rain, or a blight falling on the crops, but even the accidents and diseases which befall cattle, and trivial losses in trade, are considered instances of a devil's malevolence. Sometimes, again, demons are content with frightening the timid, without doing any real harm. People hear a strange noise at night; and immediately they see a devil making his escape in the shape of a dog as large as a hyena, or a cat with eyes like two lamps. In the dusk of the evening devils have been observed in a burial or burning ground, assuming various shapes one after another as often as the eye of the observer is turned away; and they have often been known at night to ride across the country on invisible horses, or glide over marshy lands in the shape of a wandering, flickering light. In all their journeyings they move along without touching the ground; their elevation above the ground being proportioned to their rank and importance. I have known a village deserted and the people afraid even to remove the materials of their houses, in consequence of the terror caused by stones being thrown on their roofs at night by invisible hands. Demons more malicious still have sometimes been known under cover of the night to insert combustible materials under the eaves of thatched roofs. Even in the day time, about the close of the hot

season, when the winds fail, they may often be seen careering along in the shape of a whirl-wind catching up and whisking about in their fierce play every dry stick and leaf that happens to lie in their path. In short, the demons do much evil ,but no good. They often cause terror but never bestow benefits , or evince any affection for their votaries. They must be placated by sacrifice because they are so mischievous ; but there is no use supplicating their favour. If in any case the hope of obtaining a benefit seem to be their votary's motive in worshipping them, further inquiry proves that it is under the supposition that the demon's malignity stands in the way of what would otherwise be obtained as a matter of course.

Though the Natives, especially the lower classes , regard the demons with dread, they think that Europeans have no reason to fear ; and a similar exception is sometimes made in the case of the Mahomedans. The god worshipped by the Mahomedans is supposed to be more powerful than the demons and able to protect his worshippers from their assaults. As for Europeans, no one considers that they require any kind of protection. On the principle enunciated by Balaam , " surely there is no enchantment against Jacob ; neither is there any divination against Israel ," the demonolaters seem to consider European Christians as secure from danger. They suppose them even more than a match for any of the poor black man's goblins. In consequence of this immunity, whilst the servants and followers of an European are exposed to many alarms, their master neither sees nor hears any thing unusual. I have heard of only one case in which the Natives supposed that an exception had occurred to this rule of non-interference with Europeans. A Missionary was about to build his house near a place where a devil – a Pariar who had met with a violent death – had taken up his abode ; and at this, it was said the devil was highly displeased. Every time a heavy shower of rain fell , (for the bungalow was built during the monsoon,) it was represented that the devil was endeavouring to destroy the work.

And sure enough, the neighbours saw that a great deal of damage was done by the rain, and that a great deal of the work was destroyed. They saw however, that the Missionary, nothing daunted, built up again what had fallen, and at length finished his house; whereupon they came to the old conclusion that no demon could cope with an European; and ere long gave it out that the demon in question had removed his residence in disgust to another tree.

In most of the particulars mentioned a similar superstition respecting goblins and demons will be found to exist all over India. Every Hindu work containing allusions to Native life, and the Dictionaries of all the Hindu dialects, prove the general prevalence of a belief in the existence of malicious or mischievous demons in demoniacal inflictions and possessions, and in the power of exorcisms. The chief peculiarity of the superstition, as it exists amongst the Shanars, consists in their *systematic worship* of the demons in which all believe. In every part of India innumerable legends respecting goblins and their malice are current; but scarcely any trace of their worship in the proper sense of the term, much less of their exclusive worship, can be discovered beyond the districts in which Shanars, or other primitive illiterate tribes; are found. In travelling down to Tinnevelly from the north, the first village which is found to be inhabited by Shanars, Virdupatty, about 30 miles south of Madura, is the first place where I have observed systematic devil-worship. In like manners, in Travancore, devil-worship appears to commence with the first appearance of the Shanar caste in the neighbourhood of Trivandrum; from whence it becomes more and more prevalent as you approach Cape Comorin. This superstition respecting demons, in whatever form and under whatever modifications it may appear is come to be productive of evil; but it was reserved for the Shanars, and a few other illiterate tribes to exemplify the debasing effect of it in its fullest extent by their worship of demons, a degradation beneath which human mind cannot descend.

The places in which the demons are worshipped are commonly termed " Pe coils " or " devil temples " ; but let no one suppose from the use of the word "temple" that the building possesses any architectural pretensions, or inquire to what order or style it belongs. Some of the temples, especially those erected to the sanguinary forms of Cali are small, mean , tomblike buildings , with an image at the further end of the cloister. But the majority of the devil-temples are of a still more primitive construction. The walls are built neither with stone nor brick ; the roof is neither terraced nor tiled nor even thatched ; and they have neither porches nor penetralia. A heap of earth raised into a pyramidical shape and adorned with streaks of white-wash , sometimes alternating with red ochre, constitutes, in the majority of cases, both the temple and the demon's image ; and a smaller heap in front of the temple with a flat surface forms the altar. In such cases a large conspicuous tree -- a tamarind , an umbrella tree , or even a palmyra whose leaves have never been cut or trimmed—will generally be observed in the vicinity. This tree is supposed to be the devil's ordinary dwelling place, from which he snuffs up the odour of the sacrificial blood and descends unseen to join in the feast. The devil-pyramid is sometimes built of brick and stuccoed over ; and when thus built of coherent materials it rises into something of the shape of an obelisk. So far as I have seen, the angles of the pyramid are made to correspond with the cardinal points. Its height rarely exceeds eight feet and is generally less than five. This pyramidal obelisk is a distinguishing characteristic of devil-worship, and appears to have no counterpart in Brahmanism or any other *ism* in India. I have often wished to discover what was supposed to be signified by this peculiar style of image ; but never met with any one who could give me any information.

Sometimes the worshippers go to the expense of building walls and a roof for the permanent accommodation of their demon , with a porch for the musicians. The devil in this case being of Brahmanical lineage, they generally erect an image to his

honor, in imitation of their Brahmanical neighbours. Such images generally accord with those monstrous figures with which all over India orthodox Hindus depict the enemies of gods, or the terrific forms of Siva or Durga. They are generally made of earthen-ware, painted white to look horrible in Hindu eyes; with numerous up-raised hands and instruments of torture and death in each, and the representation of infants crushed between their teeth; or with buffalo-heads and huge prickly clubs. In every such case the artist borrows his realization of the fiend's character from images invented and patronized by the meek Brahmans themselves. In the worship of the aboriginal Shanar devils, the pyramid I have mentioned is the nearest approach to an image which I have observed. It is worthy of remark that every word which denotes an image is of Sanscrit origin, and as such, must have been introduced by the Brahmans.

When it is determined to offer a sacrifice to a devil a person is appointed to act the part of a priest. Devil-worship is not, like the worship of the deities, whether supreme or subordinate, appropriated to a particular order of men, but may be performed by one who chooses. This priest is styled a " devil - dancer." Usually one of the principal men of the village officiates; but sometimes the duty is voluntarily undertaken by some devotee, male or female, who wishes to gain notoriety, or in whom the sight of the preparations excites a sudden zeal. The officiating priest, whoever he may happen to be, is dressed for the occasion in the vestments and ornaments appropriate to the particular devil worshipped. The object in view in donning the demon's insignia is to strike terror into the imagination of the beholders. But the party-coloured dress and grotesque ornaments, the cap and trident and jingling bells of the performer, bear so close a resemblance to the usual adjuncts of a pantomime that an European would find it difficult to look grave. The musical instruments, or rather the instruments of noise, chiefly used in the devil-dance are the tom-tom, or ordinary Indian drum, and the horn; with occasionally the

addition of a clarionet when the parties can afford it. But the favorite instrument, because the noisiest, is that which is called the bow. A series of bells of various sizes is fastened to the frame of a gigantic bow; the strings are tightened so as to emit a musical note when struck; and the bow rests on a large empty brazen pot. The instrument is played on by a plectrum, and several musicians join in the performance. One strikes the string of the bow with the plectrum, another produces the base by striking the brazen pot with his hand, and the third keeps time and improves the harmony by a pair of cymbals. As each musician kindles in his work and strives to outstrip his neighbour in the rapidity of his flourishes, and in the loudness of the tone with which he sings the accompaniments, the result is a tumult of frightful sounds, such as may be supposed to delight even a demon's ear.

When the preparations are completed and the devil-dance is about to commence, the music is at first comparatively slow, and the dancer seems impassive and sullen and either he stands still, or moves about in gloomy silence. Gradually, as the music becomes quicker and louder, his excitement begins to rise. Sometimes to help him to work himself up into a frenzy he uses medicated draughts, eats and lacerates his flesh till the blood flows, lashes himself with a huge whip, presses a burning torch to his breast, drinks the blood which flows from his own wounds, or drinks the blood of the sacrifice, putting the throat of the decapitated goat to his mouth. Then, as if he had acquired new life, he begins to brandish his staff of bells and dance with a quick, but wild, unsteady step. Suddenly the *afflatus* descends. There is no mistaking that glare, or those frantic leaps. He snorts; he stares; he gyrates. The demon has now taken bodily possession of him; and though he retains the power of utterance and of motion, both are under the demon's control, and his separate consciousness is in abeyance. The by-standers signalize the event by raising a long shout attended with a peculiar vibratory noise, caused by the motion of the hand and tongue, or the tongue alone. The devil-

dancer is now worshipped as a present deity, and every by-stander consults him respecting his disease, his wants, the welfare of his absent relatives, the offerings to be made for the accomplishment of his wishes, and, in short, every thing for which superhuman knowledge is supposed to be available. As the devil-dancer acts to admiration the part of a maniac, it requires some experience to enable a person to interpret his dubious or unmeaning replies – his muttered voices and uncouth gestures; but the wishes of the parties who consult him help them greatly to interpret his meaning.

Sometimes the devil-dance and the demoniacal *clairvoyance* are extemporized, especially where the mass of the people are peculiarly addicted to devil-worship, and perfectly familiar with the various stages of the process. In such cases, if a person happen to feel the commencement of the shivering fit of an ague or the vertigo of a bilious headache, his untutored imagination teaches him to think himself possessed. He then sways his head from side to side, fixes his eyes into a stare, puts himself into a posture, and begins the maniac dance; and the by-standers run for flowers and fruit for an offering, or a cock or goat to sacrifice to his honor.

The night is the time usually devoted to the orgies of devil-dancing. And as the number of devils worshipped is in some districts equal to the number of the worshippers, and as every act of worship is accompanied with the monotonous din of drums and the bray of horns, the stillness of the night, especially during the prevalence of Cholera or any other epidemical disease, is frequently broken by a dismal uproar, more painful to hear on account of the associations connected with it, than on account of its unpleasant effect on the ear and nerves.

I have so often made inquiries on this and kindred subjects, and so often heard these scenes described by those who had formerly taken part in them, that the account I have given,

making allowance for local diversities, is I am sure substantially correct. But I have not myself witnessed these orgies, except from a distance; nor is it always practicable to gain a near view of them, for the presence of an European, by which term is meant in these parts a Missionary, is supposed to be a hindrance to the performance of the worship. If a Missionary approach, the dancing instantly ceases, and the demon cannot be prevailed upon to show himself. This may partly arise from the idea already referred to, that the devil's power is inferior to that of the white man; but it is perhaps mainly the result of an intuitive feeling of shame, or, in some instances of the wish to behave politely to a person whom they respect and who is known to regard their worship with abhorrence.

(2.) THE OFFERING OF BLOODY SACRIFICES

One of the most important parts of the system of devil-worship is the offering of goats, sheep, fowls & c. in sacrifice, for the purpose of appeasing the anger of the demons and inducing them to remove the calamities they have inflicted, or abstain from inflicting the calamities which they are supposed to have threatened. This is one of the most striking points of difference between the demonolatrous system and Brahmanism. It points to a higher antiquity; and, though now connected with a base superstition, is more capable of guiding the mind to the reception of Christianity than any thing which Brahmanism contains.

There is nothing very peculiar in the manner in which the sacrifice is performed.

The animal which is to be offered in sacrifice is led to the altar of the devil-temple adorned with red ochre and garlands of

flowers. Ordinarily its had is separated from the body by a single stroke of a bill-hook; the sacrifice being considered unacceptable to the demon if more than one blow is required. The decapitated body is then held up so that all the blood it contains may flow out upon the demon's altar. The sacrifice being now completed the animal is cut up on the spot, made into curry, and, with the addition of the boiled rice and fruit offered to the demon on the same occasion, forms a sacred meal of which all who have joined in the sacrifice receives a share.

The sole object of the sacrifice is the removal of the devil's anger or of the calamities which his anger brings down. It should be distinctly understood that sacrifices are never offered on account of the sins of the worshippers, and that the devil's anger is not excited by any moral offence. The religion of the Shanars, such as it is, has no connection with morals. The most common motive in sacrificing to the devil is that of obtaining relief in sickness; and in that case at least the rationale of the rite is sufficiently clear. It consists in offering the demon, life for life -- blood for blood. The demon thirsts for the life of his votary or, for that of his child ; and by a little ceremony and show of respect, a little music and a little coaxing, he may be prevailed upon to be content with the life of a goat instead. Accordingly a goat is sacrificed; its blood is poured out upon the demon's altar, and the offerer goes free.

The Shanars have not intellect enough to frame for themselves a theory of substitution; but their practice and their mode of expression prove that they consider their sacrifices as substitutions and nothing else. And there is abundant reason to believe that at a former period the doctrine of substitution was carried out to the extent of offering human sacrifices to the demons --- a practice systematically followed to the present day by the Khonds, the most primitive and least Brahmanized portion of the aboriginal Tamil race.

From the particulars now mentioned it is sufficiently obvious that, if in some things the Shanars are farther than other Hindus from Christianity; they are in a better position for understanding the grand Christian doctrine of redemption by sacrifice. It is true that the place of the supreme God is supplied by blood-thirsty fiends and that with the rite of sacrifice confession of guilt is not enjoined. No trace remains of the fate of the victim having been considered a symbol of what the offerer himself deserved; nor consequently is there any trace of the idea of the removal of sin by the sacrifice of the substitute; and of course sacrificial rites are never supposed to point to a sacrifice of greater efficacy beyond. Nevertheles, the fact of the prevalence of bloody sacrifices for the removal of the anger of superior powers is one of the most striking in the religious condition of the Shanars, and is appealed to by the Christian Missionary with the best effect. The primitive tradition is sadly distorted, but some portion of it still remains to bear witness to the truth.

With the extension of Christianity devil-worship is visibly declining; and the diminution of offerings and influence connected with the declension of their worship is supposed to have given the demons such offence that they are now less placable than formerly. I have heard a Shanar naively complain that in his youth people could keep the Cholera out of their villages, but that now, the Christian religion has prevailed to such an extent that it is scarcely possible even to keep the devils in check, so that the mortality from Cholera has greatly increased. Notwithstanding this complaint, devil-worship in many districts of the country is as rampant as ever; and it must be confessed that even amongst the Christian community it has not entirely disappeared. A large number of the people commonly called "Christians" are still unbaptized; and of those who are baptized a considerable proportion, as in every other community, are destitute of real principle and faith. It is obvious that the demonolatry in which they were brought up cannot be eradicated

by any thing less powerful that a sincere belief in Christianity and a participation in the " spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind " which a sincere belief communicates. Consequently , their tendency to mix up sacrifices to devils in times of prosperity , must prove a cause of no little conflict and disquiet in the days of " the mixed multitude " who compose the first generation of converts. By some of this class of persons it is considered a wise policy to keep on good terms with both God and the devil ; and when disease is abroad, if a goat given in sacrifice, (particularly if it can be offered so secretly as that neither Missionary nor Catechist shall know if it) will have the effect of pacifying the devil the and keeping death out of the house , what prudent man would grudge the devil the sacrifice of a goat ? The principle involved herein is considered to be the same as that on which they act in subsidizing the Maravers --- the hereditary thieves of the district. No one considers this an offence against the civil magistrate. Far from considering it an offence , the magistrate himself sanctions the practice. Why then , think they, should it be considered an offence against God to pay an occasional subsidy to keep the devils quiet ? In these remarks it should be remembered that I refer not to the Native Christians of Tinnevelly in a body, nor even to the majority of the neophytes, but to the daily -diminishing minority of the unprincipled and uneducated.

The demonolatrous creed I have now described prevails in India more extensively, and has probably existed from a higher antiquity , than is generally imagined. With some variations it is found in all the hill regions and amongst all the semi-civilized or migratory tribes who have not yet been enslaved by the higher castes , and completely subjugated to Brahmanism ; and prevails more or less among the lower classes throughout India , especially as allied with the worship of the female forms of Siva. In its most primitive shape , never superseded and scarcely at all modified , it forms , as has been said , the creed of the greater part of Tinnevelly and of the Tamil portion of Travancore , wherever Shanars

predominate. In all the Mission stations in Tinnevelly and south Travancore the Native Christians, with here and there a rare exception, were once worshippers of devils.

The Brahmans, and some of the higher castes who have adopted their prejudices, profess to despise both the devils and their worship, and even the worship of the Ammens, and would reckon it an insult to be considered capable of condescending to worship a low caste demon. But in times of calamity Brahmans do not hesitate to worship the Ammens; and have even been accused of making offerings to demons, by stealth, or through the mediation of persons of a lower caste.

Emigrants from the Telugu country, who form a considerable portion of the population in some parts of Tinnevelly, have generally become worshippers of devils. But the system more usually followed by this class is the worship of the satellites of the Brahmanical deities, or that of the female Energies. Such devils, in the proper sense of the term, as they are found to worship are of Tamil origin, as their names denote, and were probably worshipped at first from a wish to conciliate the gods of the soil.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SHANAR DEMONOLATRY lies in the unknown depths of antiquity, an antiquity apparently equal to that of the worship of the elements or the heavenly bodies. If the allusions contained in the Vedas to the victories gained by the elementary deities over hostile fiends be considered a mythic representation of historical facts, the worship of devils would seem to have been anterior to the Vedaic system itself. Of elementary worship there is no trace whatever in the history, language, or usages of any portion of the Tamil people. The emigration of the Brahmans to Peninsular India appears, consequently, to have been subsequent to the first great change in their religious system. The religion they introduced was probably a rudimental form of Sivism, with a tendency to the mystical and mythological systems of the Puranas. There is not the least reason to suppose that the Vedaic

or elementary system was ever known in the Tamil country, either as an indigenous religion, or as introduced by the Brahmans. The Brahmans were doubtless the civilizers of the Tamil people; and the traditional leader of the their migration, Agastya, is said to have reduced the Tamil language to order and to have given it a Grammar, yet not one of the old Tamil names of the elements, the heavenly bodies, or the operations of nature is masculine or feminine, as they are in Sanscrit, in accordance with the elementary doctrines of the Vedas; and there is not the least trace of the elements, or powers of nature, having at any time been considered as personal intelligence.

The inventors of both the Vedaic and the demonolatrous systems seem to have been equally destitute of moral sentiments. Each adored power not goodness, operations not virtues; but whilst the former deified the operations of nature, the latter demonized the powers of heaven.

It appears very improbable that demonolatry originated in any form of Brahmanism. It may be true that from time to time, especially after the lapse of elementary worship into mysticism and of hero-worship into terrorism, a few Brahmanical ideas have been added to the demonolatry of the Shanars. A few of the demons who were formerly independent may have been tamed and taken into the service of the petty divinities; or a particular devil may be represented as having formerly been a god and degraded to the rank of a demon for refusing to pay due worship to some superior deity. Or, the Brahmans who civilized the peninsula, in appointing to every class its specific objects and modes of worship may have sanctioned the appropriation of certain local goblins and demons to the worship of the vile, aboriginal populace. But these facts, far from accounting for the origin of demonolatry, take its previous existence for granted; and there are many direct reasons for assigning to demonolatry an origin independent of Brahmanism and anterior to its introduction into the Tamil country, or even into India.

(1.) In all Brahmanical myths the demons are represented as being the ancient enemies of the gods, as warring against the gods, and sometimes gaining the upper-hand, and as the inventors and special patrons of bloody sacrifices. Every new deity gains prodigious victories over the demons; and yet somehow they never are thoroughly conquered. This style of representation is inconsistent with the idea that demonolatry is an off shoot of Brahmanism; but will perfectly accord with the supposition that before the influx of the Brahmans from central Asia demonolatry was the religion of the early Tamil inhabitants of India, and that the Brahmans on their arrival labored in vain to extirpate it.

(2) In all Brahmanical books and legends in which the state of the original inhabitants of Peninsular India is described, we are referred to a period when demons ruled in the primeval jungles, and when those jungles were inhabited solely by vile sinners who ate flesh and offered bloody sacrifices. Contemporaneously with that period the sacred Brahmanical race, and all connected with it down to its servile tribes, were represented as invariably worshipping the superior gods, and most commonly using unbloody rites. In like manner the Buddhist represent Ceylon prior to the advent of Buddhism as having been overrun with serpent gods and demons.

(3) Every word used in the Tamil country relative to the Brahmanical religions, the names of the gods, and the words applicable to their worship, belong to the Sanscrit, the Brahmanical tongue; whilst the names of the demons worshipped by the Shanars in the south, the common term for "devil," and the various words used with reference to devil-worship are as uniformly Tamil. Just so in Western Africa, Mahomedan terms belong to the Arabic, whilst aboriginal Fetishism uses the native tongues. In a few cases in which the name of the Shanar demon is Sanscrit, the facts of the affinity of its worship with the sanguinary worship of Siva or Cali, and its late introduction into the Tamil

country are distinctly known; as, for instance, in the case of Mari-Ammen, the inflictor of small pox, and Maha-Cali of Ougein, the Cholera goddess. The fact of the terminology of devil-worship being purely Tamil throughout is to my mind a tolerably conclusive argument of the Tamil origin of the system. With reference to the social state of the Tamil people, it is clear that the origin of the words in common use will enable any one to determine what was introduced by the Brahmans, the civilizers of Peninsular India, and what existed before their arrival. All words relating to science, literature and mental refinement, all that relate to an advanced civilization, and all words pertaining to religion, the soul, and the invisible world, are in the language of the Brahmans; whilst all words that relate to the ordinary arts of life, the face of nature, the wants, feelings, and duties of a rude and almost a savage people, are Tamil. In like manner, the words used with reference to devil-worship being exclusively Tamil, we are obliged to assign to this superstition a high antiquity, and refer its establishment in the arid plains of Tinnevelly and amongst the Travancore jungles and hills to a period long anterior to the influx of the Brahmans and their civilization of the primitive Tamil tribes.

(4.) It is worthy of remark that there is not any priestly order devoted to the worship of devils. Every act of Brahmanical worship requires a priest; and even in the worship of the inferior deities and in the sanguinary worship of the Brahmanical emanations and Ammens, (systems of religion opposed to the claims of the Brahmans, but to a considerable extent influenced by their example) the persons who officiates must be exclusively devoted to the duty and a member of a priestly family. On the contrary every devil-worshipper is, or may be, his own priest. Not unfrequently the head-man acts as priest the whole village; but he may be superseded for the time being by any voluntary devotee, male or female. This patriarchal, unofficial priesthood evidently points to the origination of the system in very early times.

(5.) It is scarcely credible that the practice of offering bloody sacrifices to malignant demons should have originated with believers in either the Vedas or the " Orthodox " Puranas. The comparatively recent origin of the ascetical worship of Siva and of the sanguinary worship of Durga is generally conceded ; and both the theory on which those rites are founded and the practices themselves are foreign to the genius of legitimate Brahmanism and to the teaching of the entire circle of the philosophic schools. The supremacy of the Brahmans has always been directly attacked and their services set aside by the inventors and patrons of those sanguinary rites, who have in general been Sudras, and have founded priesthoods and successions of Gurus in their own caste to the exclusion of the Brahmans. It is also to be remembered that in whatever degree sanguinary rites may be practised by any portion of the Hindus, in any part of India, they are directly opposed, not only to the influence and example of the Brahmans, but to the practice of the immense majority of the more cultivated Hindus and the higher castes. So extensively indeed have Brahmanical principles prevailed, and so express has ever been their opposition to sanguinary rites, especially since the influence of Buddhism began to be felt, that in every part of India, Hindus who consider themselves *par excellence* orthodox regard the inviolability of life as the most sacred of laws. It would appear, therefore, that in so far as the Hindus of the higher castes have attributed to any of the Brahmanical deities a two-fold character - one a character of mercy, and the other a cruel, sanguinary character, with a horrific form; and in so far as they have resorted to the practice of offering bloody sacrifices to any of these deities, on the dark side of his character, to that extent they have rendered homage to the aboriginal demonolatry and borrowed its spirit, either from a wish to conciliate, or, as is more probable from their having imbibed a considerable share of the fear and gloom of their demonolatrous predecessors or neighbours. In a similar manner the Buddhists of Burma and Ceylon have added to Buddhism the worship of

indigenous demons, though nothing can be supposed more foreign to the genius of Buddhism than such a system.

(6.) One of the clearest proofs of the un-Brahmanical origin of devil-worship is obtained by a reference to the history of the devils themselves. The process of *demonification* is still going on amongst the Shanars; and in every case the characteristics of the devil and his worship are derived from the character and exploits of his human prototype. There is a continual succession of devils claiming the adoration of the Shanars, and after a time sinking into forgetfulness; but not one of the more recent of the race has any connexion with the legends of Brahmanism. One of the demons most feared at present, Palaveshum, was a Maraver of a servile family, who made himself celebrated for his robberies and outrages "from Madura round to Quilon" during the latter period of the Mahomedan government. So celebrated has he become already that thousands of persons are called after his name. Mahomedans also, who certainly have no connection with Brahmanism, are supposed to have become devils. But it is a still more remarkable fact, and one which I suppose cannot easily be paralleled, that in the district of a neighbouring Missionary an European was till recently worshipped as a demon. From the rude verses which were sung in connection with his worship it would appear that he was an English Officer, a Captain Pole, or some such name, who was mortally wounded at the taking of the Travancore lines in A.D. 1809, and was buried abut 25 miles from the scene of the battle in a sandy waste; where, a few years after, his worship was established by the Shanars of the neighbourhood. His worship consisted in the offering to his *manes* of spirituous liquors and cheroots;

(7.) Far from the system of demonolatry practiced by the Shanars having originally been taught by, or borrowed from, the Brahmans, there is probable evidence that the Brahmanical system, in so far as it was introduced, was considered by the Shanars a hostile and rival creed, and expressly opposed as such. For

instance, the grand national festival of the Shanars, the only day throughout the year which they keep as a holiday, that which they consider in a special manner the day of rejoicing appointed for Shanars, is the first day of the solar month of Adi. This, according to the Hindu Astronomy, is the first day of the sun's southern course, but of this circumstances the Shanars know nothing. No people can be more utterly ignorant of Astronomy than they are. In so far as they are concerned, the first of Adi is professedly celebrated as a festival in memory of Ravana the Racshasa King of Ceylon, who on that day carried off Sita the wife of Rama, the hero-god of the Brahmans. Ravana's prime-minister, Mahodara, is believed to have been a Shanar; and to this day the Shanars glory in the historical position gained for once by a member of their caste, and rejoice over Rama's grief and in Ravana's joy ! Does not this circumstance point both to the Cingalese origin of the Shanar caste and to the prevalence amongst them in early times of anti-Brahmanical zeal? The Shanars have even succeeded in making reprisals upon Brahmanism. In a village in my neighbourhood Rama himself has been converted into a demon. Only think of the all-glorious hero-god of the Hindus, Rama-chandra, the conqueror of the Racshasa and demons, and civilizer of the peninsula, worshipped as himself a demon with bloody sacrifices and devil-dancing and the usual frenzied orgies ! Here Brahmanism gives only the name : the form and genius of the system are anti-Brahmanical ; and both the original independence and the hereditary predominance and strength of the Shanar system receive an apt illustration.

The religion of the Shanars though unconnected with Brahmanism is not without a parallel in the tropics. If a connection must be established between it and any other form of religion it may be classed with the superstitions of Western Africa, as a species of fetishism. In fetishism we observe the same transformation of the spirits of the dead into demons, the same worship of demons by frantic dances and bloody sacrifices, the

same possessions and exorcisms, the same cruelty and fear and gloom, the same ignorance respecting a future state, the same shadowy, indolent, good-spirit half visible in the back-ground, the same absence of a regular priesthood, the same ignorance of asceticism, religious mendicancy and monasticism and of every idea of revelations and incarnations. It may be said with safety that the two systems have a greater resemblance to one another than either of them has to any of the other religions of the heathen world. There is no reason however for supposing that there is any connexion between them, beyond the origin of both in the same temper of mind and character, and the suggestions of the same Evil-spirit.

At the close of this account of the demonolatry of the Shanars, its practices and probable origin, few readers will be able to avoid the reflection ; -- how different is the religious condition of these rude tribes from all the ideas we had formed of Hindus and Hinduism. Notwithstanding the world-wide fame of the Hindu Vedas, Puranas, and Shastras, here is an extensive district in India where they are unknown. Here, amongst the Shanars survive the Asuras and Pythons with which the gods did battle in their youth. Notwithstanding the successive prevalence of the Brahmanism of the Vedas, Buddhism and the Brahmanism of the Puranas, the influence of each in turn, and the eagerness of each to make proselytes, here is a tract of country containing, exclusive of the Brahmanical inhabitants, a population of upwards of 6,00,000 souls, all Hindus, all belonging to recognized castes, who do not appear ever to have received any of those religions, and to whom what Europeans call Hinduism is still a foreign creed. None of the sects into which orthodox Sivism is divided can be found here, much less any of the innumerable sects into which Vishnuism has been broken up. Here in polished and metaphysical India we find a civilization but little raised above that of the Negroes, and a religion which can only be described as fetishism. And what exists in Tinnevelly is only a type of the social and religious condition of

extensive tracts throughout India with which Europeans have not yet become familiar.

It seems necessary to say any thing more respecting the religion of the Shanars, and of the other castes and classes to which our native Christians in Tinnevelly belong; for every thing which can strictly speaking, be called their religion has now been described. In giving an account of their demonolatry, I have exhausted their scanty creed. A scantier creed or one less adapted for the purpose of a religion, will not easily be found truly, "the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." But the scantiness of the creed is not its worse feature. Considered as a libel upon God and religion, it furnishes a melancholy subject for contemplation to the Christian mind. Whatever be the opinion of antiquarians respecting the history of demonolatry, Christians cannot hesitate to pronounce it hellish, both in its origin and in its character. It is in truth a hateful, horrid system. God is banished from his own world and hearts He made. The sun is banished from the sky and even the hope, that the darkness which now exists will give place to a brighter sky hereafter, is shut out. Endeavour Christian reader to realize the position of a heathen Shanar, and learn to be thankful for your privileges. Frame to yourself, if you can, the picture of a godless world – a world in which material principles and malignant demons divide the supremacy between them. When afflictions occur, let it be imagined that it is malice that strikes and that neither does justice direct nor mercy mitigate the blow. Suppose the grand and affecting truths which the Bible reveals reveals respecting the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost unknown and the light which it sheds on man's duties and destiny extinct. In the absence of the solemnities and sanctities of the worship of God in Christ, picture to yourself the frantic rites with which the heathen Shanar worships his devils. The stillness of the night is broken by the din of the drum and the harsh bray of the horn announcing the

commencement of a devil-dance in a neighbouring village. Follow the sound through the tortuous, prickly -poar lanes, and witness the performance from a distance by the help of the flickering torch light. Observe in every thing the combination of the ludicrous and the sanguinary - the grotesque insignia of office worn by the officiating priest, his truculent, devilish stare, the blood bespattered garlands on the temple and altar, the row of boiling pots on one side and a row of energetic musicians on the other, the promiscuous heap of offerings, and the characteristic union of finery and filth every where visible. Watch the excitement of the admiring crowd rising higher and higher with every new contortion and shriek of the devil dancer, and with the rising vehemence of the musical uproar; and hear ever and anon the long vibratory shout of delight and wild devotion into which the assembled crowd breaks out. Then as you turn away from these debasing orgies, contrast with them the worship of God in spirit and in truth, the reasonable service with which Christians worship their holy and beneficent Creator through their Mediator's merits, the renunciation of the devil and all his works to which Christ's followers are pledged, the stillness of the Christian Sabbath, the sound of the Church-going bell, the soothing, cheering voice of Psalms and Prayers, the instructions, the persuasions, the devout earnestness of the Christian preacher, the healing balm of Sacraments -institute this comparison and you will not only be impressed with the greatness of the difference between Divine worship and the worship of devils, but will also be stimulated to use every means in your power for the diffusion of the knowledge of the better way.

Very little reflection will suffice to convince every one that the character of the system of religion, professed by a people before their conversion to Christianity, must for several generations exert considerable influence on their character as Christians. The mass of our converts are Shanars, and were demonolaters. Not many years ago demonolatry bore undisputed

sway amongst the lower classes throughout the province; and though its influence has been curbed and curtailed by the extension of Christianity, it is still the predominant religion in most parts of Tinnevelly. In those localities where Christianity has been extensively diffused and received, particularly in the neighbourhood of Nazareth, devil-worship has diminished in proportionate ratio, and even they who remain in heathenism have ceased to follow the practice with the regularity and zeal of former times; but where Christians are few and their influence small, devil-worship continues to be as popular as ever. Converts from demonolatry cannot all at once forget, though they may have abandoned, the system in which they were trained. They will necessarily bring with them in to the Christian church much of their materialism, their superstitious fear, and their love of rude excitements. The mind cannot slough off its old ideas and associations in a day. Even in England we still meet with relics of old pagan usages. Besides, Christianity operates only in so far as it received into the heart by faith. The Christianity of the unsanctified intellect has no more influence on the conduct than so much mathematics. It is only when religion becomes a passion, or a habit, that old things pass away and all things become new. It is surely not to be supposed that of the 40,000 souls connected with the Missions in Tinnevelly all are Christians in earnest. The public has often been told that the majority, though converted from heathenism to Christianity, do not appear to have been converted from sin to God; that the faith of the majority is only an intellectual assent to half-understood truths; and that the number of persons who appear to be sincerely pious is small. It follows that in the majority, or at least in a large proportion of cases, the superstitious fear of the old demonolatry must have survived conversion to the new theology; or at least that the roots of the old system remain. We must therefore, in estimating the value of Tinnevelly Christianity and the character of the Native Christians take their former religion into account, its characteristics and its tendencies, the temptations to which they all necessarily be

exposed through their old associations, and the mental and moral peculiarities to be anticipated in persons who are once demonolaters. It is cheering to perceive that, as regards freedom from those peculiarities, the second race of native Christians, where the Mission is old enough to have produced one, is much superior to the first. Early Christian training has taught this now on rising generation not only to avoid devil-worship, but to be ashamed of the thought of practising it. It has banished materialism, without replacing it by rationalism, and has imbued large numbers of persons, with that cheerful, trustful temper of mind that belief in God's providential care; and that patience under affliction which Christianity inculcated. There is room for improvement even as regards the religious condition of the rising generation, but it is a consolation to know that the influence of Christian truth is visibly increasing and that superstition is visible dying out. Let us therefore thank God and take courage.

II. THE MORAL CONDITION OF THE SHANAR RACE

From the description now given of the religion of the Shanars, it will not be difficult to form an estimate of its moral results. The influence of religion in forming or modifying the character of nations is well known; and the peculiarity of the Mahomedan character in all countries and amongst all races is a common but conclusive illustration of the fact. Nations are what their gods are. Hence, the demonolatry of the Shanars being known, their ignorance of god and of a future state, and their isolation from other classes, one may safely infer that their moral condition must be very low and debased. The absence of the restraining and purifying influences of Christian truth is, under all circumstances, a fatal want. Nothing can compensate for ignorance of God. But when in addition to this negative evil there is the positive calamity of a system of lies, -- a system such as Brahmanism in which the gods are partial and immoral, or a system like the Shanar demonolatry in which every supernatural power that is supposed to take any interest in man is believed to be animated with malignity; -- when the religion of a people like the former is really, but not avowedly, or like the latter, is avowedly, not from heaven but from hell, the worst moral results cannot but be anticipated; and at the same time we may expect to find the moral effects of the one system differ in some particulars from those of the other.

In considering the moral conditions of the Shanars as affected by their demonolatry, or by the operation of subordinate causes, incidental light will be thrown on some correlative questions. Reasons will probably appear why Christianity has prevailed more amongst the Shanars than amongst the higher castes; reasons why the Shanars as a class should be less bigotedly attached to their religion and more easily impressed by Christian teaching and influences than other Hindus; and reasons also why the style of character exhibited by the native Christians in Tinnevelly differs so considerably from that of the Christians of Tanjore and Madras. It will also be easier to conjecture what the

Missionary's work and duty amongst the Shanars must be, and in what respects immediate success is probable or the reverse; as also to estimate the degree of influence which converted Shanars are likely to exert upon the higher castes.

To help the reader to come to a correct conclusion on some of these points, I shall now endeavour to illustrate the moral results of the Shanar religion and the manner in which those results are produced; pointing out where they coincide with, and where they differ from, the results of Brahmanism.

1. *The Shanar demonolatry obliterates the idea of man's accountability for his actions, and consequently fails to exercise any moral restraint.*

The Shanars having no idea of God's omniscient presence, His government of the world, or of the soul's immortality; and their demons being supposed to be destitute of a moral nature and indifferent to the conduct of their votaries, the belief of a retribution hereafter cannot enter into their creed. In accordance with this is the fact that no Shanars can be found who anticipates giving account of his conduct to God or devil. Hence, except in so far as the fear of the magistrate or the opinion of native society keeps them in check, or in so far as prudential motives stimulate their virtue, they feel themselves at liberty to do, say, and think any thing they please, and the majority of them make use of this liberty. Whatever moral restraint arises from belief in a God above us, or a judgment before us; whatever influence on the conduct or the heart is exerted by hopes of bliss, or fears of woe; in whatever degree the conviction that God's eye is upon us, and that every thought and act is recorded in the book of His remembrance, produces the wish to please him; of all these influences and restraints the Shanars are destitute. In their calculations the past is past for ever, and the present is independent of the future. As there will not be any account

hereafter all is free, allowable, and safe. Who would hesitate to tell a profitable lie or commit a pleasant sin, when, if it should become known, there is little or no shame connected with it, and should it remain unknown in this world, it is considered certain that it will never be inquired into or visited with punishment in a future state, but will remain unknown for ever? When a temptation is presented to the mind and probabilities are hurriedly calculated, this consideration will generally be found to decide the point; and hence, not only are all kinds of friends and immoralities committed daily and hourly, but, (and herein consist the chief difference between the Shanars and persons who professed system of belief is correct,) they are committed as matters of course with the coolest complacency and the most perfect freedom from fear.

The higher castes who adhere to the Brahmanical systems profess to believe that they will be called to account for their actions hereafter, and will be rewarded or punished accordingly, either by the process of a judgment and a sentence, or through the consequences of their actions accompanying them into the invisible world and determining their condition with the force of a natural law and the certainty of fate; but as, notwithstanding this professed belief, they regard their gods with reason as being no better than themselves, and therefore likely to be partial in their judgment; and as the conviction that somehow fate will befriend the righteous and abase the wicked is of little force in the absence of the sanctions of a Divine revelation from heaven; they are practically as little overawed or morally restrained by their belief that the Shanars are by their want of a belief. A loose, rationalistic faith in immoral deities is quite as inefficacious as demonolatry, or atheism itself.

2. *The demonolatry of the Shanars, equally with the Idolatry of the higher castes, disconnects the idea of moral duty from the theory of religious faith and worship. Consequently it fails exercise any moral restraint.*

We have so long been accustomed to consider justice, goodness and truth as enjoined upon us by Divine authority, and as for making a principal part of the worship and service due to God, that we find it difficult even in theory to disconnect morals and religion. It is generally supposed that whatever may be the dogmatic errors of false religions, they must necessarily, as religions, teach some tolerably correct system of morality, in which the principal virtues are commended and the principal less denounced ; and hence, that it is better for men to have a false religion than to be wholly without a religion. This charitable estimate of the religions of the heathen is so general that when it is asserted that certain religions do not inculcate morality, or are opposed to it, Europeans are apt to think the assertion slanderous and founded upon a misrepresentation of facts. But, every person who has for some time resided in India on terms of intimacy with Hindus, and who is acquainted with their social life and religious ideas, or with any of their books of authority, is well aware of the accuracy of the statement in its reference to Hinduism, and has found himself, long before he theorized on the subject, able to make the necessary distinction. Certainly nothing can be clearer than the separation of ethics from all Indian systems of religion, whether idolatrous or demonolatrous; and in this particular, the moral results of both systems, or rather the absence of moral results, would appear to be the same. Though differing in other things Brahmanism and Shanarism agree in this, that they leave man morally where they found him.

In reference to the former, proofs of the truth of the assertion lie within the reach of the British public, a large

number of books connected with the Brahmanical system having, in whole or in part, been translated and published. And an inspection of those books will prove that, with the single exception of alms-giving, which is enjoined, not as a duty in itself, but on the ground of its efficacy in conferring merit and spiritual power, no moral duty is enjoined by Hinduism, as on divine authority, or recognized as forming part of the code.

The austerities of orthodox Hindus are purely mechanical. Their restraint of the mental powers and bodily energies differs widely from the subjection of the passions by moral restraint. Their supreme deity is a mere metaphysical or pantheistical abstraction – and algebraic unknown quantity. Their contemplation of this deity is but an endeavour to comprehend existence apart from modes and substance apart from qualities. Their self-examination is for the purpose of discovering not their progress in virtue, but their progress in the persuasion that they themselves are parts of the supreme deity – non-existent parts of the great non-existent. Prayer consists in the recitation of verses of various degrees of intricate merit or magical efficacy; and the object for which prayers are recited is not the acquisition of truth, wisdom or moral goodness, but the acquisition of supernatural power. The connection, too, existing between religious ceremonies and merit is precisely that which was supposed to exist between the performance of the prescribed incantations and the attainment of magical gifts. Lying and licentiousness, pride and anger, are not, I will venture to say, forbidden, expressly

or by implication, in any Hindu religious book; and if self-love appear to be forbidden, a closer examination of the context will prove that by self-love is meant belief in distinct self-consciousness of personal identity. It is true that various books containing moral precepts are in use amongst the Hindus; but it is to be remembered that the moral precepts those books contain are totally unconnected with the dogmas and sanctions of Hinduism as a religion. The observations I have made respecting the disregard of morals refer, not to the ethical Shastras of the Hindus, which form their philosophy not their religion, and with which their religious systems have but few ideas in common, but to the Hindu, books of mythology, theosophy, ritual observances, and devotion – the strictly Brahmanical books, which profess to teach man's duty towards God, and which constitute the religious literature of the country. The ethical poems and disquisitions do not profess to be divine revelations, or even commentaries on divine revelations. To a considerable extent they are accurate transcriptions of " the law written upon the heart;" but in so far as they are ethically sound, they are irreconcileably opposed to the cardinal dogmas of the religious system and are consequently despised by religious devotees as secular and insipid. For instance, the ethical writers declare that there is a difference between right and wrong. The religious writers with one voice protest that there is no such difference, and that the perception of a difference is of itself a convincing proof of man's separation from God. The Hindu moralist

affirms that " what is done with a virtuous motive is virtue; all else is unreal show. " The Hindu religionist enjoins the act alone, and affirms that motives have nothing to do with merit. The ethical writers urge their readers to do good actions and avoid such as are evil. The grand aim of the religious writers is to persuade their readers to do nothing. Action is inconsistent with contemplation, and the depth of contemplation is reached when we cease to think, and cease to know that we are. There are few in these degenerate days who have become so sublimely spiritualized, but many may be found whose progress towards inanity is highly respectable. In consequence of the contrariety of the two systems, the natural and the religions, they who follow either consistently exhibit what to an European mind must appear strange inconsistencies. It is not uncommon to hear a most irreligious man commended for integrity and honor, or to hear it said of another that he is a religious man, a most devoutly religious man, but a great villain. The rewards also which the followers of the respective systems expect to receive correspond to the genius of the systems. The moral man seeks the reward of popular praise or his employer's favour. The religious man expects to obtain magical power, to supplant some god by superiority in merit, or finally to reach the *ne plus ultra* of Brahmanical happiness, the cessation of separate existence -- the lapse of individual being into the diving monad.

As in Europe we should dispute the existence of any connexion between morality and the Scandinavian mythology, or morality and magic, or morality and the "I" and the "not I" of German metaphysics ; so in India we may search in vain for any connexion between the religion of the country and morality.

This is the state of the case as it regards the religion of the higher castes; but the religion of the Shanars is equally dissociated from morals, and therefore equally incapable of exercising moral restraint. It does not require many words to prove that atheism, materialism, and demonolatry, whether professed or latent, cannot conduce to make men just, merciful, and true; or that, whatever ideas of moral duty the followers of such a system may possess, they have not acquired them by the help of their religion, but in spite of it. Even the Shanars are not destitute of moral ideas. Though in a low and debased condition, and destitute of the faintest glimmering of religious light, there is not any moral duty which they do not in some form recognize as binding upon them, or assent to as soon as it is mentioned. But their notions of moral duty have not been derived from, or confirmed by, the command of their devils, or their example, the fear of their anger, or the hope of gaining their favour, or the operation of any other motive connected with their system of religion. Notwithstanding their knowledge of moral obligation in theory, there is no duty which they do not

habitually disregard and violate in practice : and of all the causes that lead to this moral debasement none is more influential than the dissociation of their religion , such as it is , from their notions of morals.

No prayers , or gifts are ever offered to their devils and Ammens for the acquisition of virtuous habits or peaceful tempers. Conscience tells them that they have often neglected their duty , and been guilty of many moral offences ; but no means of any kind are used to atone for those offences , because they do not expect to be punished for them hereafter ; and they cannot suppose that their devils will think worse of a man for his resemblance to themselves. The demons' anger is not aroused by any theft or lie , or any amount of moral guilt , but flares up at an oversight or slight. An accustomed offering has been neglected , or the devil's authority has avowedly been thrown off , or the votary has avowedly been thrown off , or the votary has fallen sick ; or recovered from sickness ; or it is expected he will be brought into trouble through the demon's jealousy , or demoniacal malignity is so intense as to show itself irrespective of provocations, -- on such occasions and for such reasons ; sacrifices are freely offered ; but no one thinks of sacrificing to expiate guilt , to allay the reproaches of his conscience, or in the prospect of going with his sins upon his head into another state of existence. A man who has committed a highway robbery straightway offers sacrifice to the devil to

prevent him from getting jealous of his success, and bringing upon him the terrors of the law. Another seizes on the solitary filed of a poor widow, whom he was bound by relationship to protect and on taking possession offers a sacrifice to secure plentiful crops. Devil-worship is, consequently, not only dissociated from morality but perfectly subversive of it. If the offering of bloody sacrifices, conveyed to the minds of the Shanars any idea of their own demerit or of the necessity of expiation, the rite might be productive of moral benefit, but as it is founded on the supposition that the demon thirsts for their blood through the truculence of his own temper, not on account of any offence of theirs, the effect of the rite is only to harden them in vice and steel them against mercy. " Seeing that they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, they have justly been given over to a reprobate mind ; " and even the religion which their dark and foolish hearts have adopted tends only to sink them deeper in guilt. The corruptions of the best things being the worst, their religion is a school of immorality.

3. *In consequence of the absence of the belief that man must render an account of his conduct to God and the dissociation of morals from religion, conscience has lost its controlling power, innate depravity develops itself with fearless freedom, and truth, honor, and integrity have well nigh become extinct.*

I have no hesitation in asserting that if there be any vice or crime which is not habitually practiced by the Shanars, their

abstinence from it is not attributable to conscientious scruples of any kin, but arises, either from their want of predilection for that particular crime or vice, through their intellectual dullness or their cowardice, or from prudential regard to the authority of human laws. And what I assert of the demonolatrous Shanars, from my own acquaintance with their social life, holds equally true with reference to the social life of the Brahmanical higher castes, with whom I have come in contact. In regard to offences against the person, I have no doubt but that the natives of this part of India contrast favourably with the inhabitants of Europe; in consequence, partly, of the intense heat of the climate, which depresses their nervous activity and produces indolence, debility, and cowardice; and, partly, because the controlling strength of the executive Government is much greater in this part of India, in comparison with the strength of the individual, than it is generally in European states. I grant also that the Hindus are generally free from that greatest blot in the moral condition of Europeans, the vice of drunkenness; a vice, which Hindus suppose, like the eating of beef, to be destructive of caste purity, and which, consequently, is held in abhorrence by all but the very lowest castes in the agricultural district, and a few high caste people residing in the great towns, who have learned it from Europeans. It is worthy of remark that the Shanars who extract the palmyra juice, which when allowed to ferment is the ordinary intoxicating drink of the Hindu drunkard, avoid the use of it in its fermented state as

their case, nor in the case of the Brahmans, do the moral evils of the practice form an element in the calculation. Notwithstanding these exceptionable abatements, the mass of the Hindus, whether idolaters or demonolaters, are beyond every other people I know, sunk in moral depravity. This is not a fancy, or the opinion of a party, but an obvious, unquestionable, and melancholy fact. The Hindus are not the only depraved people in the world; but it may be asserted with confidence that the extent and universal prevalence of their depravity are without a parallel. Where else shall we find such indelicacy of feeling, and systematic licentiousness? - the habitual use of such vile, obscene expressions? - such deliberate, placid cruelty in the treatment of inferiors and brute animals? -- the commission of such flagrant acts of oppression and wrong, as matters of course, where it is supposed the injured party is too weak to resist? - such intense, all-pervading, over-mastering covetousness? -such ingratitude, selfishness, and perfidy? - such a preference of under-hand trickery to open opposition? - such cheating and pilfering in all mercantile dealings ? such bribery in all legal proceedings? -- such fawning obsequiousness to the great, and such haughtiness to the little? But especially where shall we find such lying - such habitual lying - such audacious lying - such multiform life-long, universal lying, as we meet with in India, and which may well be called the national vice? Courts and cutcherries take no cognizance of most of the

vices and crimes to which I refer, and European officials are too much raised above the people to be acquainted in any considerable degree with their domestic life and social state. If a Hindu is officially subordinate to you, or supposes that he can gain any thing by your good opinion, he will appear all subserviency and smiles; but let the relative position of the parties be changed, and what a change appears in the conduct and tone of the meek Hindu ? What trader or planter, -- what Missionary, --- what private individual is there, who has resided any length of time of India on terms of social intimacy with the people, and is ignorant of the truth of these statements ?

It is not to be supposed that conscience has ceased to utter her voice. Notwithstanding the debasement into which the people have fallen, they know what is right and what is wrong. But, generally speaking, the voice of conscience, though heard, is not in the least attended to; and to appeal to a Hindu's conscience or sense of honor, in a case in which his interest is opposed to yours and he has you in his power, is about as useless as an appeal to the good feelings of a hungry tiger.

It is a common saying in Europe that " there is honor even amongst thieves;" but in India honor is little known even amongst the members of the most influential classes ; and such as is found is of that hardy kind which is not hurt by duplicity. The Psalmist said " *in his haste* " that

" all men were liars ," but in India he would have re-uttered the assertion deliberately. It is true that amongst Europeans , whatever be their nation or persuasion , we shall find persons who are destitute of honor and truth , persons who habitually disregard the dictates of conscience , and whose hearts are seared against compunction . It is quite true also that for every vice or crime and every shade of depravity noticed in India , something similar or worse may be proved to exist in Europe ; and hence some persons , Europeans as well as Hindus , are ready to argue too hastily that there is no material difference between Hindu morals and Europeans. But the difference is most material. What passes unnoticed by society in the one case , excludes a man from society in the other. What in the one case is the rule , in the other case is the exception. For instance ; -- in Europe , persons who act habitually an unprincipled or dishonorable part --- cheats , liars and adulterers , are marked men, shunned by the majority of their fellows and outcasts from virtuous society. But in India no man is excluded from a social feast or a meeting of the caste , or even shunned in private life , on account of any immoralities of which he may be guilty. Offenders against caste purity are visited with social excommunication. But I never met with , and never heard of a case in which Hindu offenders against truth and honor were punished in this or any other way, or in which known villainy appeared to have the smallest effect in lowering a Hindu's social position.

In Europe, again, in dealing with persons who follow dubious occupations or who live by their wits - low public house -keepers, itinerant dealers in trinkets, hackney coachman, professed gamblers, and such like, you are prepared to expect that they will outwit you if they can and feel few qualms of conscience respecting their success. But in India you meet with open dishonesty, not only in persons belonging to similar classes, but amongst all classes alike, --- landed proprietors, wealthy merchants, candidates for public employment, (I say nothing of those who have obtained it) literary characters, respected heads of families, -- in short, with a few rare and marked exceptions, all classes in the community from the potent noble down to the starving slave. To some extent the wealthy are kept within the bounds of ordinary profligacy by their pride or their ambition. If they fear being despised for a particular act by their inferiors, or wish to appear honorable men in the eyes of those from whom they have something to expect, an appeal to their honor is sometimes answered by their vanity or their self-interest; either of which in the absence of honor helps them to keep up the appearance of it. Hence persons who see them rarely are induced to think more favourably of their character for integrity than of that of the inferior classes. If however there be any intrinsic difference between the higher classes and the lower, you more safely believe the slave's word than the word of his lord.

After an intimacy of many years with the people of my own neighbourhood, -- having had various dealings with many of them during that time, and knowing, from the common talk of the country, the character and many of the proceedings of almost every body in the district, the decision to which I have been constrained to come is, that the wealthy and powerful classes, particularly amongst the Shanars, with whom I am best acquainted, are more depraved and unprincipled than their poorer neighbours. Indeed I do not know one person of the wealthier class who has not notoriously been guilty of oppression and violence, of frauds or briberies, who does not pride himself on the success with which he has crushed his foes by such means, or who can safely be believed on his most solemn asseveration, in a matter in which his pecuniary interests or the credit of his caste are at stake.

In this statement I do not include the native government officials, whose characters are sacred as long as they hold office. Their reputation for justice is their fortune; and it would be strange if some of them did not prefer clean hands and promotion to immediate gain and eventful disgrace.

It is not to be supposed that either the higher castes or the lower are destitute of every trace of good feeling. God's image, how greatly so ever defaced, has not been utterly obliterated in any man. The Hindus as a race are

more depraved than any other people I know ; but neither have the Brahmanical idolaters become as vile as their gods , nor have the Shanar demonolaters become as malicious as their fiends. The most vicious are not always pursuing a course of vice ; nor do the most deceitful lie literally " from morn till noon , from noon till dewy eve. " There is apparent in some more frequently , and even in the worst sometimes , a kind of negative virtue. No people are more pliable than the Hindus, or more respectful when in a good humour , or more polite in their behavior to superiors and to strangers ; and as they are decidedly a light hearted people , fond of sales and gossip and amusement , one will sometimes forget the darker phase of their character.

As there are differences amongst individuals , so in respect of particular virtues and vices, differences arising from religious or caste diversion may be observed. In many things I have classed the Shanars and the higher castes together, the moral effects of unbelief and misbelief being nearly the same ; yet there are some particulars in which the higher castes appear to have the advantage , and others in which the advantage is on the side of the Shanars. I shall mention one of the most prominent points of difference on each side.

(1.) *The higher castes are taught by their religion to be liberal in their charities.*

Almsgiving is the only moral duty expressly taught by the Brahmanical religion ; and the credit it deserves on this

account is not great, for it does not ground the duty of almsgiving on compassion, or brotherly love, or our obligation to do as we would be done by; but recommends it solely on the ground that it confers merit and power over the unseen world. Hence, though charity as an *opus operatum* is very common, charity as a sentiment is rarely observed. In consequence of this defect in their teaching, the charities of the higher castes are ostentatious. They never " do good by stealth and blush to find it fame ;" and when about to distribute alms, literally " blow a trumpet before them." Their charities to private individuals bear no comparison with the extent of their public charities --- benefits bestowed upon the community, such as wells and choultries; or to their religious charities –gifts of money and lands to temples, or food to devotees. Still, the almsdeeds of the Brahmanical Hindus are sufficiently numerous to attract the notice and gain the commendations of Europeans, and in this point their practice contrasts favourably with that of the Shanars. The Shanar demons offer no encouragement to the compassionate and charitable, and grudge the bestowal of gifts on any but themselves. They have no visions of heavenly worlds with which to kindle the imaginations of their votaries, and, not having any bliss to bestow on the meritorious, they have not taught the existence of merit in almsgiving or in any thing else. Consequently the Shanars are charitable only to the extent to which Brahmanism has pervaded their demonolatry, or in so far as the sentiment of mercy has not been totally

extinguished, and some germs of natural compassion for the poor and the sick still survive. As this degree is minute at the best, the charities of the heathen Shanars are minute and rare, and certainly cannot for a moment be compared with those of the Christian portion of the caste.

(2.) *On the other hand the Shanars contrast favorably with the higher castes as regards sincerity.*

The greatest of all obstacles to the spread of Christianity in India consists in the practice and love of lying which pervade all classes of the people. The tyranny of the sun makes them slaves; and "lying," it was long ago remarked, "is the vice of slaves." In the case of the Shanars, this evil exists; but it exists in a less formidable degree than in the case of the followers of the Brahmanical systems. On first acquaintance the Shanars may seem as deceitful and dishonest as the rest of the Hindus, and their character for sincerity will not bear to be tried by an European or Christian standard. But the longer I have observed the characteristics of the various castes, I have been the more convinced that as regards deceit, especially deceit in matters of religion, the Shanars must yield the palm to the high castes, and the high castes and all castes to the Brahmans. Shanar deception is less habitual and systematic than that of their high caste neighbours. Their lies are never so natural, so smoothly polished, so neatly dove-tailed, or uttered with so complacent a smile. They often hesitate in a lie and betray confusion, as if they were not used to it; and when frightened a little have been known to

let out the truth. Hence they are cheated by the higher castes at every turn ; but though they have many dealings in common , and some of the Shanars are not destitute of ability , I have not heard of a case in which a Shanar succeeded in cheating a high caste man. The Shanars have a worse reputation for breaking their promises than for downright deceit ; and in this case it is their procrastination , their indolence , and fickleness which are mainly to blame.

It is particularly in regard to religion that the one class manifests more sincerity or rather less deceit than the other.

The follower of the Brahmanical system professes to believe in 330 millions of gods, but in the majority of cases does not care a pin about any of them. He is punctiliously attentive to his religion as a system of observances -- as a *religio* , in the primitive meaning of the term. He never forgets his ablutions, his holy ashes , or any of the thousand and one ceremonies which sanctify his domestic life ; but ordinarily he has not the smallest iota of belief in the divinities he so elaborately worships. He is forward to tell you that he is not so dull-witted as to believe that any of them exist ; and , if he have picked up a little religious philosophy, he will aver that nothing really exists. Brahma , Vishnu, Siva are a delusion ; virtue and vice are a delusion ; all is a delusion. It is superfluous to point out the consequences of this lying rationalism in eradicating sincerity and candour and preventing the ingress of the truth.

The Shanar, on the other hand, worships sincerely the demons his frightened fancy has conjured up. He believes and trembles. He has seen the grim objects of his worship in visions and dreams; or caught glimpses of them in burying-grounds, or when passing through the jungle at night. He can tell you the place, the time, and all the circumstances of every malicious freak of every devil in the neighbourhood; and when sickness is abroad there is no mistaking the anxiety, the hurry, and the eagerness with which he endeavours to appease the demon's anger. It has been proved in such cases times innumerable that, "all that a man hath he will give for his life." So deeply rooted in the Shanar mind is this belief in the existence and power of demons that, as has been already observed, even after they have become Christians many of them continue to dread their old "idols of the den." They allow that it is inconsistent with Christianity to *worship* devils, and believe that the great God will protect them from their assaults, but they are careful not to do any thing needlessly to kindle their ire. It must be obvious that the sincerity of the belief entertained by the Shanars in their demons, though productive of superstitious gloom, and incompatible with a high caste of thought, is morally a more promising feature of mind than the conceited rationalism or universal scepticism of the Brahmanical higher castes, and capable of being turned to better account. It explains their comparative freedom from deceit. It acts as a counterpoise to their stupidity, timidity, and fickleness; and I

have no doubt but that it is precisely this feature in their character which, more than any other cause, has contributed to bring them under Christian influences, when the higher castes keep aloof, and makes them the most reverential, submissive, and easily disciplined of all native Christians.

Notwithstanding these exceptionable peculiarities of the higher castes and the demonolaters respectively, the moral depravity by which both are characterized and which *pervades the whole mass of Hindu society, bears witness to* the evil consequences of their ignorance of God. " Know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that *My* fear is not in *thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts.* " *The estimate of the* moral condition of the Hindus, whether idolatrous or demonolatrous, whether of high or of low caste, which I have now given is gloomy and unpromising in the extreme. But beyond question it is an gloomy and unpromising in the extreme. But beyond question it is an accurate picture, and one drawn directly and honestly from the life. " The fool has the said in his heart there is no God." There is the religion of the Hindus. The description of their moral condition follows. " They are corrupt, and have done abominable works; there is none that doeth good. " Many persons seem to consider heathen as unfortunate rather than guilty, and regard them with a sort of sentimental, romantic interest. They are aware of their religious errors and pity their ignorance, but are not fully aware of the extent and

wilfulness of their moral depravity. Hence they sympathize more with the " poor " heathens, than with the honor of God's righteous law which, though written upon their hearts, those heathens have outraged, and by which they stand condemned ; and they feel reluctant to assent to the strict accuracy of the scriptural statements and the justice of the scriptural denunciations of the moral condition of the heathen world in the 1st chapter of the Epistle to the Romans and elsewhere. I trust the account I have now given may have the effect in some mind of vindicating God's ways to men in His dealings with the guilty, and at the same time enable every reader to see that the greatest difficulty - the only real difficulty - with which Christianity has to contend in India, is a moral rather than a religious one.

It is indeed scarcely possible for those who are not personally acquainted with this field of labour to form an adequate estimate of the moral difficulties which lie in the way of the reception of Christianity and the development of its fruits. All the principles and habits which form the natural character of the Hindus are, as we have seen, opposed to the requirements of a holy religion; and all the avenues by which convictions of duty and religious impressions gain access to the soul are systematically closed. The conscience is seared, the will enslaved and palsied, and the whole weight and influence of society ranged on the side of evil. Hence, in our intercourse with Hindus, whether high castes or Shanars, we generally find them not only unwilling to embrace

Christianity , but unwilling even to take the subject into consideration. To listen seriously to the claims of God and the evidences of religion pre-supposes the existence of habits of reflection and an awakened state of the conscience which are rarely found amongst heathens, and which , when they are found, appear to be the results of some preparatory work of God's providence or grace. But besides this preliminary difficulty , suppose Christianity sincerely received, it is obvious that the morally depraved condition of the entire mass of society must hinder, or greatly retard, the development of the Christian character. In Europe the good seed of the word is sown in a good soil. In India the climate is pestilential, and the soil is yet to be created. Ages of antecedent Christianity have prepared the European mind for receiving and exhibiting an exact impress of the Truth. Christianity has pervaded our laws, and social institutions , our science and literature , and national habits. It has given us moral sensibilities , habits of self-control , a keen sense of honor , a generous enthusiasm in behalf of truth , justice and freedom, independence in thought and courage in action, a scorn of superstition , and an irrepressible tendency – a passion –in favour of improvement and progress. Hence in most cases when an European is converted from sin to God , all the influences by which he is surrounded are favourable to the development of a high Christian character. But how different the position in which the Hindu convert to Christianity is placed ! The principles and habits received by tradition from

his fathers, his mental structure , all his remembrances and all his associations, the precepts of the national religion, the peculiarities of the national character, and the influence of the family and the caste – all those are directly opposed to his growth in piety ; and most of those influences are incapable of being turned to better account.

Who that has not had Missionary experience in India can form any idea of the depraved moral condition in which Christianity finds the Hindus ? What hearts they bring with them into the Christian fold ! -- what imaginations ! – what social evils ! – how dull and heavy their eyelids are through long sleep ! -- and even after they have been awakened , how tenacious the filth and mildew and cobwebs of ages adhere to their minds ! In their case a new patch in the old garment will not suffice. They require to have every thought and every association modelled anew. Nor can it justly be anticipated that in a single generation they will rise superior to the evil influences in which they were brought up and by which they are still surrounded , or make decided proficiency in the Christian life. At the utmost we can only expect to see a few convalescent amongst a multitude of sick – a few successful attempts to emerge from " the horrible pit and the miry clay " amidst many failures.

" ** Revocare gradum , superasque evadere ad auras,

Hoc opus , hic labor est. *Pauci quos aequus amavit*

Jupiter ; aut ordens evexit ad aethera virtus,

Dis geniti, potuere."

In the majority of cases it will hold true morally, as it does physically, that they who are descended from a sickly stock and have themselves been sickly during the period of their youth, though they should be removed to a better climate, will continue stunted and dwarfed to the end, and never be competent to lead the way in any high emprise. Our native Christians suffer for the offences of their forefathers, as well as for their own. The diseases of the soul are as certainly transmissive as those of the body. The Hindu doctrine that the merit or demerit acquired in former births determines our fate in this, is but a misapprehension of the important truth that our character and condition are to a great extent determined by the influences and tendencies, the blessings or judgments which we bring into the world with us. We are not placed, separately and singly, in the world, as independent monads. Every man is a link in a long chain, united in weal and in woe with those that preceded and those that follow him. Hence the character of a corrupt people is reformed only by degrees, by a slow and painful process -" by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." One generation labours and another generation enters into its labours. One step in advance becomes the means of advancing another step. Hence also appears the necessity of constant progress and persistency in the work in which we have embarked. Not only the present, but perhaps several succeeding generations of native Christians, must pass away before the hereditary influence of heathenism cease to operate, and the mass be thoroughly leavened and purified by the principle of a new life.

Well directed efforts extending through a long series of years will change the most deadly climate ; and we have reason to hope for moral results of a similar nature in our efforts to Christianize this people. From time immemorial the idolatrous or

demonolatrous heathenism of this province of Tinnevelly was a vast, pestilential jungle, full of rank vegetation and wild beasts and swamps and malaria. For many years only a few trees were cut down here and there, and little effect was produced. By and by, the number of the labourers increased, the work became more systematic, means and appliances adapted to the circumstances were

small proportion of the caste ; and the poverty of the mass is great and unquestionable. They are rarely in danger of starvation , but are never raised more than a few degrees above it. In the great majority of cases they are unable to cultivate their lands to advantage , to introduce any improvements which require expenditure , (even if they were willing to improve, which they seldom are ,) to embark in trade with a proper amount of capital , to build houses fit for civilized people to live in , or to do anything to make their children more comfortable than themselves. This statement is particularly applicable to the Pariars in Tinnevelly, and other castes inferior to the Shanars, whom I have included under the name of the latter , and whose poverty admits of scarcely any exception.

Poverty affects the moral condition of a people by inducing , especially in an enervating climate , disregard of reputation , disinclination for improvement , an unsettled habit of mind , and finally fatalism ; every one of which consequences of poverty is more or less distinctly exemplified in the case of the Shanars. Though a portion of the members of the caste are raised above poverty, the majority are poor , and the characteristics of the majority influence the character of the entire body , each acquiring a certain tone of mind from his intimacy with the rest. It is necessary to bear this in remembrance in estimating the difficulties which lie in the way of the hearty reception of Christianity by the Shanars , the diffusion of Christian education among them , their moral improvement , their social advancement , and their eventual sustentation of their own religious institutions. I do not consider their poverty an obstacle to their *nominal* reception of Christianity ; for , being less enslaved than the higher castes by the pride of race and the pride of life , and to a great extent disregarded by the Brahmans , and even by the sectarial Sudra priests , as too poor to suit their purpose , their situation must be considered as favorable to their reception of Christianity , rather

than otherwise. But, as must be obvious, it is unfavorable to the development of those social and economic benefits and that advancement in material and mental civilization which Christianity brings in her train. It is nevertheless a fact worthy of notice that wherever the Shanars have sincerely embraced Christianity and adhered firmly to their profession of it, their worldly circumstances have sensibly improved; and that, not in consequence of any pecuniary help they received from the Missionary, but through the operation of moral causes alone – through their gradual progress in diligence, their partial emancipation from the tyranny of customs, and their acquirement of habits of economy and forethought.

2. *There are circumstances in the temporal conditions of the Shanars which, as engendering a litigious spirit, produce an injurious effect on their moral condition.*

The litigiousness of the Shanars attracts the notice of strangers on their arrival in Tinnevelly, and is generally considered one of the most characteristic feature of the caste. Nearly every one you meet is found to be engaged in law suits, or in private debate and strife, respecting his rights as a proprietor of land; the progress of these law-suits and disputes forms the ordinary staple of popular talk and gossip; and attempts to settle them by arbitration occupy a large proportion of the time of the elders of every considerable village. It is, however, my decided conviction that the litigiousness observed amongst the Shanars is not so much the result of any natural tendency as of circumstances in their condition which are capable of being obviated, or greatly modified, and that the moral evils arising from the habit are not insuperable.

In ordinary affairs the Shanars do not seem to be more tenacious of their rights, jealous of encroachment, or quarrelsome, than other classes of Hindus. It is only in their disputes about their lands that they are chargeable with

litigiousness ; and I am convinced that the blame is mainly to be imputed to the baneful operation of the Hindu law of inheritance amongst an illiterate people.

In other parts of India the castes and classes , corresponding to the Shanars in social rank , are either tenant farmers or farm servants. But the Shanars of Tinnevelly, though , as a class , poor , uneducated , and in a low state of civilization , can boast that , with few exceptions, they are proprietors of land.

The Nadans , the descendants of the original lords of the soil , are a numerous class , and still retain the larger portion of the land in their own possession ; but as there is not , and never was , any obstacle to their mortgaging or selling their lands to others , (their rights of seignorage alone being considered inalienable ,) most of the actual cultivators , originally the renters or servants of the Nadans , have in process of time become proprietors of the pieces of land they cultivate and the trees they climb. The lands which have thus come into the possession of nearly every Shanar family have been minutely , it might almost be said ,infinitesimally, divided by the operation of the Hindu law of inheritance. In accordance with this law the father's property , whether real or personal , is divided equally amongst his sons ; and if the family estate be considerable , every daughter receives a field or two as a marriage portion. The eldest son receives no more than the youngest ; though not unfrequently he manages to appropriate an additional portion, whilst acting as administrator to the estate during the minority of his brothers.

As there are no manufactures , and but little local and no foreign trade , and as every handicraft is monopolized by the caste of artificers , there is nothing to induce any Shanar voluntarily to abandon agriculture and seek some other means of support.

Every one lives on the produce of his lands ; and a proportionate share of the property and its produce is the only means of livelihood he transmits to any of his children. Property is

thus more and more sub-divided, until it ceases to be able to support the impoverished owner, and he is obliged, as a last resource against starvation, to sell his portion, if an unincumbered portion remain; or his relatives, exemplary friends in need, take advantage of the opportunity and dispossess him of his lands by a general combination.

The whole proprietary class, through the operation of this comminuting process, would long ere this have sunk into the deepest poverty and misery, had it not been that population has for ages ceased to increase, and that the more powerful systematically encroach upon the property of the weaker, and compel them to migrate or work for hire.

In most cases the sons of the original owner agree to preserve the family estate undivided, for the sake of the advantage of associated labor; and as long as this arrangement continues, the portion which falls to each of the share-holders is a portion not of the soil, but of the produce. A division is generally insisted upon in the time of the grand-children, if not before. Under the most favorable circumstances every one is obliged to be upon the alert to secure his own share of every crop; and in most cases, the encroachments and retaliations, the feuds and jealousies which occur from time to time, and the total want of honesty and principle which every partner in turn evinces, compel the interference either of the heads of the village as arbitrators, or of the Sircar as preserver of the peace. Every succeeding generation aggravates the existing confusion of rights, and the estate becomes ere long a battlefield of conflicting interests.

An "undivided Hindu estate," as it is technically called, in the possession of a divided family, may be described as a joint stock company in which all the share-holders alike are directors, secretaries, and treasurers, and in which it is the undisguised endeavour of each partner to appropriate the common profits and charge upon the company his private liabilities.

In any country and amongst any class an association like this would be productive of evil. It will not be difficult to imagine what the result must be amongst a demonolatrous, semi-civilized people, destitute alike of legal knowledge and of moral principle. In the second or third generation, the share-holders, unable any longer to bear the troubles and broils incident to their partnership, determine to effect a division of the estate, with a definition of the boundaries of each person's share. But such a division is more easily determined upon than effected; and the attempt invariably converts domestic feuds into open war.

One has sold his proprietary rights, and yet insists on obtaining a share in the division of the remainder. Another by private trade, or superior industry, has added a few fields to his ancestral portion, and is naturally annoyed when called upon to surrender them for equal division. The father of a third party mortgaged half his share; the son of the mortgagee is ready to swear that the mortgage was a sale; and neither party has any document to produce in confirmation of his statement. One person has mortgaged his portion over and over again ; and the mortgagees are at war amongst themselves without any prospect of a settlement. Two of the partners have effected a pretended sale of the entire property, without the consent or knowledge of the rest; and the rest have retaliated by selling the portion belonging to the two to a powerful neighbour. In this complicated position of things, the conflicting parties agree to refer their case to the arbitration of a punchayat, or village council of five, who have been appointed to settle disputes by the general voice of the neighbourhood; a course which is generally preferred to a reference to the courts, as being both less expensive and more likely to elicit the facts of the whole case and lead to an equitable decision. Possession being considered by the village arbitrators, as by most lawyers, of more importance than abstract rights; the greater number of the documents connected with the dispute having been lost, destroyed, found to be ambiguously drawn up, or alleged to be forgeries; not one of all

the sales, mortgages , & c., having been registered in any court or cutcherry ; and the testimony of neighbours , on which the village punchayats mainly rely, being generally either favorable or adverse according to their connection with the one party or the other ; it is but seldom that the decision of the arbitrators is founded absolutely upon the merits. More commonly they endeavor to effect a compromise between the parties , and settle subordinate points by calling upon each litigant to swear to the truth of his statement , or to cast lots whose each portion shall be. When a compromise of this kind is made and agreed to, it often happens that the soil is acquired by one, the trees which grow or may be planted in the same soil by another, and the houses that have been or may be built upon it by a third -- an arrangement in which will be pervaded many a loop-hole for future contention.

Amongst Shanars it not unfrequently happens that no person concerned in the dispute, whether litigant or arbitrator , is able to read or write. All depend upon some clever rogue who acts as secretary and registrar to the council ; and it has often been known that , when the decision was subsequently referred to , a few important words were found to have been inserted or omitted to favor one of the parties.

The settlement of these disputes about property by a court of arbitrators is at best only an equitable compromise, and in many cases, as might be expected , it proves to be only a temporary expedient , attended with dissatisfaction and doubt.

The weaker party always complains that he has not received justice ; and if he should subsequently become stronger in funds or friends , the decision not being legally binding , he revenges himself by rejecting it and effecting a forcible seizure of what he considers to be his rights. The old disputes are then revived , the litigation commences afresh ; and an appeal is made to the council of arbitrators in another village.

All the time these feuds have been carried on, the entire estate has stood registered in the Sircar revenue accounts as the property of the great grandfather, who by a kind of legal fiction is still alive. He is personated by a descendant of his eldest son, who has, ex-officio, received the common ancestor's name, (the Tamil for grandson is " namesake, ") and who to save trouble and keep the estate undivided has acted as agent for his relatives in the payment of the land tax, and in keeping custody of a few scraps and shreds of " the mother title-deed. " This person, perhaps the prodigal of the family in his youth, is now the most needy; and some day new light is thrown upon the case by his appearance before the police with one of his long, pendant ears slit, and a profusion of red-ochre and saffron wounds all over his body. He complains that he was in peaceable possession of certain lands, (as he can prove by Sircar *Puttahs* and receipts for the land-tax which he has brought with him,) up to the previous day, when he has assaulted, driven out of his field, his ears slit, and the produce of his fields carried off by a band of his enemies; and therewith he prays for protection for the future as occupant and possessor. His hired witnesses agree in their testimony; the village accountant's good offices have prudently been retained; his receipts and *Puttahs*, and the entry of his name in the registry as responsible for the entire land-tax, are accepted as proofs of the fact that he has been in possession; and the result not unfrequently is that the police authorities by a summary decision put him in possession of the whole estate, in their capacity of preservers of the peace, and inform the rest of the annoyed share-holders that they may have their remedy by a reference to the civil courts.

Here commences a new and more public course of litigation, which may eventually be more definite in its results, but is not general more equitable, and is always more tedious, expensive, and harassing, than the proceedings of the local arbitrators.

When all the shareholders in a landed estate, are, as the Shanars generally are, illiterate, destitute of principle, and on the verge of pauperism, the Hindu law of progressive sub-division must inevitably produce a harvest of feuds and litigations; and even in cases which occasionally occur, in which a number of the litigants are peaceable and honestly disposed people, the circumstances in which they are placed, and their total want of education and forethought, plunge them in litigation against their will. Being unable to read or write, they have always been accustomed to give their word instead of their bond, and to consider the one as good as the other; and when a neighbour offers a similar security, so long as he talks plausibly, they see no danger in accepting it. They forget that men's minds sometimes change with their circumstances, and that they ought to be prepared for the hostility of those who are now their friends. They should at least take care to provide documentary evidence for the protection and guidance of their children, in the event of the children of their neighbour looking upon the transaction in a different light. But these ideas are too transcendental to enter the minds of the untutored Shanar peasant. Every one was accustomed to trust his neighbour's word, without taking the precaution of obtaining even his mark; or, having, no idea of the value of documents when a dispute was not going on, he had allowed the white ants to eat up the few vouchers his father left him. Persons might on such principles of procedure as these ply a handicraft, or transact the business of a petty trade, without much inconvenience ; but when property in land is at stake, want of intelligence and prudence on the part of the joint proprietors, and a course of interminable divisions and sub-divisions must inevitably produce confusion and every evil work. That persons of so humble and illiterate a class as the Shanars should so generally be proprietors of land is a peculiarity which is not elsewhere met with, and one which lies at the foundation of the litigiousness complained of. The majority really do not know whether they are *de jure* proprietors of the fields they possess or not. They know that they have many

rival litigants; but they know also that they are in possession, as their fathers were, and this knowledge satisfies their conscience.

To such an extent are all rights enveloped in confusion that I do not know of a single case in my own neighbourhood in which the possession of a field is undisputed; and in buying land for church-building, or other Missionary purposes, I have generally considered it safest to deal with the possessor *de facto*, whoever he may be, and ask no questions for conscience' sake. In a few cases, for additional security, I have paid the full purchase money to two parties; and if at any time I have gone out of my way to inquire who was of right to be considered the owner of the field, the only result has been the discovery of a long succession of feuds and frauds running back beyond the memory of man.

The remedy for this state of things must be sought in an alteration of the Hindu law of subdivision, --- a result which cannot reasonably be anticipated ; or, better still, in the diffusion of education and of those habits of prudence and forethought which all education, but especially that which is connected with moral and religious training, is found to promote. The latter remedy is now being vigorously applied; and I have no doubt but that in another generation or two the litigiousness of the Shanars will cease to be proverbial. Amongst those who are still heathens all rights continue to be uncertain and unsettled. Every thing may be contested by every body. But where Christian education has been in operation for a number of years, disputes have sensibly diminished ; councils of arbitration have acquired juster views and greater influence; and in the various arrangements that are now made respecting the disposal of real property less and less room is left for subsequent litigation. The law of inheritance remains unaltered, but the increased enlightenment of the people renders its operation less baneful to the public peace; and when conversion from heathenism occur, though disputes are brought into the Christian community, it is to effect a settlement of them.

The increased price which palmyra sugar now brings in consequence of the establishment of sugar refineries in Cuddalore, and the influx of money into the country through the opening for profitable labor presented to the poor by the cultivation of Coffee in Ceylon, together with the establishment of so many Mission stations and the erection of so many Bungalows and Churches throughout the province, have improved the condition of not a few of the poorer classes of the Shanars, and enabled them to redeem portions of their encumbered property. But the advantage springing from this source is but temporary; and it is much to be wished that local manufacturers of some kind could be introduced, and that the raising of scanty crops on sterile sands, and the climbing of the palmyra ceased to be the *sole* stay and support of the entire people. So long as they have only the produce of their lands to depend upon, the law of inheritance remaining as it is, the sub-division of property cannot be effectually arrested by merely moral motives; and one cause of litigation will be found to survive.

It were superfluous to attempt to point out the prejudicial influence of a litigious spirit on the moral condition and religious prospects of the people amongst whom it exists. It is sufficient to state the degree in which it operates.

3. *The languor and apathy produced by the heat of the climate exert considerable influence upon the condition of the Shanars, morally, socially, and intellectually.*

   Religion, civil institutions, and social habits are pre-eminently influential in the formation of national character; but climate and its correlative material influences exert a modifying effect. Whatever excites nervous energy develops a spirit of ambition, courage, and endurance; and whatever diminishes nervous sensibility and depresses the vital powers induces apathy, timidity, indolent contentment, and a disinclination to change. The influence of climate on the vital energy being confessedly great, its influences on

the social and moral well-being of a people, though indirect, must also be considerable; and hence, in endeavouring to form a correct estimate of the condition and prospects of a people, peculiarities of climate and their results cannot be left out of the account. Though the soil be of a similar nature to what is found to exist elsewhere, its productiveness is affected by excess or deficiency of rain or heat. In like manner, whilst moral influences are every where the same in themselves, their strengths, developments, and products are more or less proportionate to the degree in which physical energy and mental vitality are found to exist.

The climate of Tinnevelly is one of the most equable, but one of the hottest and dryest in India; the annual range of the thermometer being less than 20 degrees; and the heat for nine months in the year continuously, day and night, being upwards of 80 degrees. Whatever be the effects of such a climate, the Shanars are exposed to them in all their intensity. During the hottest part of the year, from March to September, the principal occupation of the men is that of climbing the palmyra, a tall mast-like palm, with only a few fan-shaped leaves at the top. The object of this laborious task is to obtain the juice which flows from the bruised flower-stalk of the tree, and which is collected, as it drops, in little pots tied to the stalk. This task they are obliged to ply during the greater part of every day, in the full blaze of a vertical sun. The women are at the same time engaged in boiling down the sweet juice into a coarse sugar, in a temporary hut in the vicinity of the trees; and though they have the protection of a roof, this advantage is neutralized by the heat and smoke connected with their work. The more wealthy, being able to hire assistants, are not so much exposed to the sun; but the daily labor of the vast majority

is that which I have described; and unquestionably it is a more exhausting and stupifying species of labor than any other performed within the tropics. It will readily be supposed that exposure to the unmitigated force of so fiery a climate, combined with such incessant toil, must have the effect of depressing nervous energy and drying up the springs of mental vitality. And if in the majority of cases the result be a state of lethargy and apathy, as it must be confessed it is, a charitable mind cannot but consider this result as rather the misfortune of the Shanars than their fault. But whether it be a fault or a misfortune, its consequences, as regards their social and moral condition, are such as must be lamented. Whatever advantages arise from strength of will, or strength of emotion -- from the ambition which desires, or the courage which dares to excel -- from earnest zeal, or tender sentiment, or resolute persistance; of these advantages, and they are neither few nor insignificant, the inhabitants of the tropics in general enjoy but few, and the portion which falls to the lot of the Shanars is literally less than nothing, the entire tendency of their character being in the opposite direction. In the majority of cases the result is not simply apathy, or dull contentment, but downright indolence; a feature which may truly be considered the most prominent in the character of the Shanars, as deceit is the most prominent in the character of the higher castes. There cannot be a stronger proof of the depth of their apathy than their conduct towards their sick relatives. In at least half of the cholera cases amongst the Shanars which I have attended, I have been obliged to employ a trusty servant to keep watch in the houses of the sick, having found by experience that the majority of the people will allow their own children to die in agonies rather than be at the trouble of keeping awake for a single night to give medicine at the appointed times. Having grown with their

> growth and strengthened with their strength, their indolence shows itself in every thing they say or do; in their work, their walk, their look, and even their amusements; in their youth as well as in old age; in their vices as well as in their virtues. It represses their anger, it mollifies their litigiousness, and is a drag even upon their avarice. It takes off the wheels of their ambition, it twines itself round their rising energies and crushes them in its folds, it turns every endeavour to improve their condition into folly; and should they become conscious of its evil effects, and wish to shake it off, the wish itself vanishes before it can ripen into an act of will. As a stream of water in descending a mountain's side infallibly discovers and follows the path in which least difficulty lies, so the *vis inertiae* of a Shanar's indolence infallibly teaches him where the *minimum* of difficulty may be found – the easiest way to take every event, and the easiest way to get through every work. Why should he attempt to overcome a difficulty, when it is so much easier to go round it? Why should he struggle through the world, when to slide through it is the custom of his caste?

Of the long train of evil consequences produced by their habitual indolence, one of the worst is the slavish homage it induces them to pay to custom. The supremacy of custom amongst all castes in India, high or low, is generally attributed to a prejudice in favor of the wisdom of their ancestors. They are supposed to regard former ages with extravagant reverence, and on this account to give the authority of law to every traditionary notion and old usage. But observation has convinced me that their subjection to the tyranny of custom is not the result of any intellectual bias, but is simply a form of indolence, and a result of the intense heat and enervating influence of the climate. To plan and forecast and provide for contingencies; to exert themselves more than the necessity of the moment demands; to dig beneath

the surface into the reason of things; to endeavour to reach a higher position than their forefathers; or to seek after any thing not ready made to their hands; -- these are tasks which the languor and laziness produced by the heat of the climate teach them to dislike. It is not any intellectual prejudice but the love of ease, produced by their languor, which has taught them their preference of old usages; and they have a prejudice against every thing new, simply because novelty is troublesome, and they don't want to be "*bothered*."

Even when one of them has by any chance adopted a new course of procedure in any thing, the same habit of mind shows itself in his reluctance to mollify his practice at any subsequent time; not that he always considers his original course the best in itself, but that "in this hot weather" he cannot bear the trouble of changing.

The same regard for custom is found to influence Europeans who have been a long time resident in this country, and especially their descendants. It is nearly as difficulty to move an "old Indian" in any new direction, as it is to move a Brahman ; and neither is much less difficult than to move a mountain.

Through the subjection of the Shanars to the tyranny of custom, it is difficult beyond conception to effect any improvement even in their temporal condition. Though they love their money much, they love their ease still more; and if a proposed undertaking be in the least at variance with their accustomed routine, or likely to be attended with any risk or trouble, however promising it may be in itself, it has no charms in their eyes. They cannot bear to make experiments, or calculate probabilities of advantage; they cannot bear the trouble of thinking. And if in the undertaking proposed to them, there be any point, however trivial, which requires to be determined by experience, the doubt and anxiety involved in such a case are too dreadful for them to encounter. It is their custom to idle away half their time, to do

their work in a clumsy, wasteful manner, to be contented with the trade and position of life with which their forefathers were content, to be always in debt, and to live from hand to mouth; and though it is easy to convince them of the propriety of abandoning such customs, or rather of adopting better customs in their room, (for without customs of some kind they cannot live,) it is a very different and much more difficult thing to induce them to act upon their convictions. They will not hesitate to make promises of improvement; -- "we'll do so and so to-morrow;" we'll commence to do it by degrees;" or, more doubtfully still, "we'll do it when we get wisdom;" but in nine cases out of ten their only object in saying so is to induce you to leave them to themselves.

It is a curious circumstance that whilst the indolence of the Shanars is such a hindrance to their improvement, it has been productive of at least one good effect, by keeping in check the sanguinary tendency of their demonolatry. It might be expected that their conduct would be marked by the cruelty and blood which characterize their worship; but the heat of the climate has mollified the acerbity of their tendencies and deprived them of the courage to be ferocious.

The indolence of the Shanars being to a great extent the result of circumstances external to the will, and being to that extent connatural and constant in its operation, it is useless to argue with it; for even when you have produced conviction, you have not advanced a single step nearer obtaining your purpose. You may batter down the strongest stone wall; but what effect will your battering train produce upon a bank of earth? The thick mud walls which Hindus cast up round their town, and which, though they look so contemptible, prove so excellent a defence, are but types of the manner in which the same Hindus defend, their creed against arguments and their social system from the troubles and perils of improvement. Active resistance might tend to unsettle their minds, but the passive resistance of sleepy unconcern is as safe a defence as it is effective.

There are other causes, besides the influence of climate from which apathy arises; and sometimes, as in the Turkish empire, where the climate is fitted to develope mental energy, its influence is neutralized by the over-mastering strength of religious prejudices. But where the climate is unfavorable to energy, and directly productive of bodily and mental languor, what can save the people from yielding themselves up to indolence? I know of only one thing that can save them; and that is the diffusion of Christianity amongst them, with its moral excitements, its conflicts and encouragements, its education of the youthful mind, and its gifts of Grace. In the case of the heathen Shanars, no such influence counteractive to that of the climate exists. They have no principle within, or motive from without, or communication of life from above, to arouse their minds; and hence their indolence, and the moral and social evils consequent upon it, seem incapable of mitigation so long as they remain heathens.

In those of them who have been converted to Christianity other influences are beginning to operate and impel them into a state of progress. But for one or two generations to come it cannot be expected that either their physical or mental energies will thoroughly be roused. Christianity must root itself in their affections ; what they know intellectually they must learn to believe in and appropriate ; they must be trained to activity and energy from their earliest years; and, withal, it may not be left to their option whether they will abandon their hereditary indolence and endeavour to improve themselves, or not. Christianity is a complex idea, including, or appropriating, all influences that conduce to man's well-being in this life and the next; and those influences each in its turn must be brought to bear upon their drowsy minds. They must be shamed out of their apathy, and urged forward in the road to improvement. Mere doctrinal teaching is not sufficient to meet the exigencies of the case, nor the use of merely moral persuasion. If we would save them from themselves, the pedantry of adherence to the strict letter of European systems and

scholastic precedents cannot be retained. We must deal with them, not as professors, but as pastors and fathers, adapting our measures and motives to the circumstances of each case, with the patience of wisdom and the authority of love.

From this peculiar necessity of meeting and overcoming the indolence of the people have arisen the " plans " to which Missionaries so often refer, -- plans which vary so much with the place, the time, and the circumstances, and which are so often reviewed and recast, and their effectiveness scanned with so much anxiety. Whatever be the immediate object of the Missionary's plans, whether they relate to the management of the schools, or to the congregations --- to the control of the native teachers, or to the social improvement of the people, it may safely be said that they all aim at the accomplishment of one and the same object. All are intended to meet, master, and rout out the monster vice of indolence. Amongst a people free from this vice, our plans would be simple indeed; and our time would not be interrupted by employments which are uncongenial --- I will not say to our work, for of that they form an important part --- but uncongenial to our tastes and unconducive to our own edification.

We cannot expect that the Shanars will ever acquire the energy and fire of the inhabitants of colder and more favoured climes. But there is so much mental excitement involved in the sincere reception of Christianity, the powers of the soul receive such a stimulus from the new, magnificent, and affecting ideas which Christianity reveals, that although the physical tendency to indolence should remain, the awakened mind, lit up by the energy of a new life, may be expected to acquire the will and the ability to bring the physical tendency under control. Even in cases in which Christianity is only received with a mechanical faith, the punctuality, order, and obedience which the members of the congregation are taught, from the time of their profession of Christianity, and the exercise of the mental powers, the habits of discipline, and the spirit of emulation in which the Christian

children are trained, cannot but produce ere long a considerable effect. Still we must not be so sanguine as to anticipate any great social change for some time to come. A whole tribe will not move rapidly; and the larger portion of the Shanars has not yet begun to move.

4. *The intellectual dullness of the Shanars seriously affects their moral condition and prospects.*

The statements I have made respecting their hereditary poverty and indolence and the degree in which physical causes tend to aggravate and perpetuate those evils, must have prepared the reader to form a low estimate of their mental capacity and augur unfavorably of their desire to cultivate and improve such powers as they have.

Such anticipations are in accordance with facts, the Shanars as a class being perhaps the least intellectual to be found in India. Where Christianity has not been introduced, the great majority of the people are not only unable to read, but unwilling to learn or to allow their children to learn. The only persons who know one letter from another belong to the class of Nadan land-owners -- men of property and substance, whose pecuniary interests would suffer if at least one of the family were not able to sign his name and keep notes of his accounts. Even amongst persons of this class not more than one in ten is found to have acquired this ability; and hence it is a common practice amongst the Nadans to club together and employ a high caste man as their accountant. Amongst the other and greatly more numerous class of Shanars, which comprises the majority of the small proprietors and traders, and to which the climbers of the palmyra exclusively belong, I have not met with or heard of any individual remaining in heathenism who had learned to read. If such a person were any where met with, it would probably appear on inquiry that he had been a pupil in a Mission school in his youth, and had kept up his reading through the silent influence of

the example of his Christian neighbours. As it was not thought expedient, or even allowable, for women to learn, I have not heard even a tradition that any woman before the introduction of Christian education ever learned to read. Even the majority of the musicians who sing at devil-dances, the wandering minstrels who make verses at weddings in praise of all who pay them, and at least half the native physicians, are unable to read the verses they make or recite.

In these remarks I refer to the heathen portion of the Shanars; but as the great majority of the members of the caste are still heathens, and as Christianity has but recently been introduced, the intellectual condition of the Christians must necessarily correspond to that of the heathens in a greater or less degree. The totally uneducated condition of the mass of the Shanars is partly a consequence of their intellectual dullness, but it is also one of the most operative causes of that dullness. Languor indisposes to exertion, and the cessation of exertion increases languor. When this cause is viewed in connection with its correlates, we shall be able to account for the mental torpidity of this people. Let it be remembered that the exercise of the mental faculties by persons who are unable to read is a most difficult and fatiguing task, for which the indolent have less liking than for any other kind of exertion; that the climate and the occupations in which most of the Shanars are engaged are directly productive of indolent torpor both of body and mind; that all the faculties, whether physical or mental, with which human nature has been endowed, as they are strengthened by exercise so they become drowsy and feeble through disuse; that intellectual development depends so much upon organization, and is consequently to so great an extent hereditary, that on an average children resemble their parents as much in their mental capacity, in their tendencies and tempers, and in the degree in which ideas call up emotions, as they do in their features and their bodily constitution; that the mental characteristics which the Shanars or any other caste may exemplify

in one generation cannot be modified in succeeding generations, as in other countries they would be, by the intermixture of the characteristics of any other caste, class, or climate, but are perpetuated by the influence of caste restrictions and the practice of intermarriage amongst near relatives; that every caste, being cut off from intimacy with every other caste, its character can be changed, if changed at all, only *ab intra* by a change in its circumstances, or by the operation of a new class of moral causes; and that, apart from the introduction of Christianity and the establishment of Christian schools, no change in the circumstances of the Shanars, or merely moral motive, can be efficacious enough to awaken their minds, or induce them to take even the first step towards intellectual improvement by learning to read: --- let these things be taken into account, and the reader will readily understand how deep and general, and, except it be removed by Christianity, how hopeless must be the mental torpor of so poor, so indolent, and so caste-ridden a people. In the operation of the ordinary laws of nature no other result could be anticipated. A few persons may be found who are exceptions to the general rule and manifest a fair amount of intellectual acuteness, but such exceptions are few indeed, and the general characteristics of the class are strongly marked and proverbial.

Persons who have had an opportunity of comparing the Shanars with the emancipated slaves in the West India Islands think the Negroes superior to the Shanars in intellect, energy, and vivacity; and this opinion receives confirmation from the well known superiority of the Negroes to lower classes of the Hindus in every department of manual labour followed in the colonies, and the proportion generally found to exist between the physical energy of a race and its capacity for mental development. When compared with other Hindu tribes, the comparison is equally unfavourable to the Shanars. I am not acquainted with the intellectual capacity of the predial slaves on the western coast, or one of the wild hill-people; but of the castes found in the Carnatic

down to the very lowest in the social scale, I am confident that none can be compared with the Shanars for dullness of apprehension and confusion of ideas. In this assertion I refer distinctively to the Shanars themselves, not to the castes which I have sometimes included under their predominating name; for the Pariars, and even the castes inferior to the Pariars, having in their daily business more intimacy with the higher castes than the Shanars have, their intellects have been sharpened, and even their expressions and pronunciation are more accurate.

The intellectual condition of the native Christians of the Shanar caste, though in some degree modified by their Christianity, is lower than most Europeans can conceive to be possible. The difficulty we meet with in teaching the members of our congregations who are unable to read, (the vast majority as yet,) to commit to memory one short passage of Scripture every week, even if we relieve them from the still sorer task of endeavouring to understand it; and more especially the difficulty we find in making the majority of our Catechists and Schoolmasters, though the choicest intellectuals in their caste, comprehend the plainest doctrinal principles, trace the connexion of the links in the simple chain of reasoning, or draw the most obvious inferences from facts; --- these convey practically to all who are engaged in Missionary labours amongst the Shanars a melancholy idea of the intellectual dullness of the class. Even in the case of the most intelligent and studious natives we have in connexion with the Mission, (I speak of the Missions of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel,) irrespective of their weakness of character as compared with Europeans, which is a separate consideration and a very distressing one, I do not know of a single individual who really appears able to think for himself on any point of Christian doctrine, or scriptural interpretation, or on any social question; and they who appear to best advantage at our annual examinations of the Mission agents are those whose memories are most retentive of the explanations, the illustrations,

and the very expressions that have been dictated to them by their Missionaries. If this be the condition of the most intellectual class, how torpid must be the minds of the majority! and how far is it necessary for them to rise above their present condition before they can understand the reasons of the Christian faith, or apply its teaching to the direction of their lives with discriminate conscientiousness, or propagate it with an unbidden zeal springing up in the convictions of their own minds!

The dullness of intellect by which the majority of the Shanars are characterized has unquestionably a prejudicial effect on their moral condition and religious prospects. In the first instance, it tends to deter many of them from embracing Christianity. If the Christian religion, like the religious systems of the heathen world were a mechanical routine of ceremonies, or a blind belief in local legends, it would be possible to embrace it without intellectual exertion. But as it is pre-eminently a system of principles, and as even its facts are intended to be didactive, it must be understood to be available for the purposes for which it was revealed; and hence, its teachers must necessarily endeavour in the first place to make their hearers understand it, and then to impress its truths upon their hearts and initiate them into its spirit. The moment a Shanar becomes a Christian he is required to apply his mind to the comprehension of a new set of ideas; and, being perfectly illiterate, it is found necessary for him to begin by committing to memory portions of Catechisms and passages of Scripture, without which it were in vain to expect him to comprehend abstractions. This is a new kind of employment, and a most wearisome one, to people who knew that they had hands and mouths, but had no suspicion that they had minds. Yet, if they would become Christians, they cannot escape from this dire mental toil; for no Missionary will allow any man, woman, or child to be called a Christian who does not endeavour in some shape to understand what Christianity is. The diffusion of Christianity involving

systematic instruction, and instruction being distasteful to persons of feeble intellect, Christianity, in the estimation of the Shanars, is a difficult, literary religion. The name by which Christians are commonly called is "learners." A man is said "to commence to learn," when he becomes a Christian; and when he relapses into heathenism "to refuse to learn." Even in the language used by the Missionaries, when people embrace Christianity they are not ordinarily called "converts," or "proselytes," but are said to have "placed themselves under Christian instruction." Now the aspect under which Christianity appears in this peculiar state of things is by no means an attractive one to the Shanar mind; and the labour and trouble which they know their dullness will entail upon them, in the event of their becoming Christians, are a serious obstacle in the way of their conversion, which it requires some strength of conviction, or impulse from without, to enable them to overcome.

The characteristics of a people mentally and morally may be illustrated by the tenor of their objections to Christianity. For instance, in Madras, where most of the people are educated, and where religious controversy and strife prevail to a great extent, the most popular objections to Christianity are rationalistic, or virtually atheistic. In the interior, on the other hand, the objections of high caste Hindus are generally founded on their pride and secularity. "If they embrace Christianity, they will become unclean in the eyes of their caste, their social consequence will be lowered, they will be cast off by their relatives and lose their livelihood, their private conduct will be subjected to supervision, they will be required to bring their wives to Church, and their daughters must attend school." Of these objections to the reception of Christianity the last only is common to the more wealthy Shanars and the higher castes. I have not at any time heard a Shanar bring forward rationalistic objections; and question whether he could use such objections if we wished. Generally also, conversion to Christianity is found to raise rather than lower him in the social scale. The objections and excuses which the Shanars are accustomed to bring

forward are peculiar to themselves, and are excellent illustrations of their character, their mental calibre, and their social condition. Thus a Shanar will say: -- " I shall become a Christian when the rest of the people of the village come. How can I learn alone;" or, - " I shall become a Christian when God wills, when He gives me wisdom, or tells me in a dream that I must learn;" or, -- " if I become a Christian, the devil will kill me; my neighbour who began to learn last year lost an eye before two months were over, and if he had not gone back in time he would have been a dead man ere now;" or, -- " if I become a Christian, farewell to dances and festivals and caste customs ; farewell to the dear, delicious uproar of tom-toms and horns, at weddings and funerals;" or, -- " if I join the congregation, I shall not be allowed to work on Sundays; every little accidental fault will be strictly enquired into, and I shall be expected to give money to a great many Societies; "or, as a last defence, from which they think nothing can drive them, --" if I become a Christian I shall have to learn a great deal; morning and evening, the gong or drum will be calling me to Church, and if I don't come often you will be vexed; and the Catechist will always be running after me to teach me something or other. I am a poor, stupid man and don't understand any thing. Why should I take so much trouble about any thing that is not eatable or wearable? You say if I become a Christian if will be well for me after I die; but who has seen heaven? who has seen hell?" It is the Shanar idea, not that their religion is true, but that it is good enough for them. " Christianity, though a very noble religion, is not suitable for hard working stupid people such as they are, who always go to sleep when their work is over and are not accustomed to think." They never venture to suppose that it is not a true religion, or not a good one abstractly. Unsophisticated Shanars would reckon it the height of impudence for any one to say that the religion of the white gentleman -- judges, magistrates, and missionaries, besides the Governor General and the Queen - is not a true religion. But its truth is like the truth of mathematics, very puzzling and very profitable to poor

people - a species of truth which it is not necessary for them to know. " As it is necessary for the village accountant to understand the extraction of square-roots, and the astrologer to know in what asterism the moon is, so it is necessary for Europeans to understand Christianity. Without it how could they administer justice as they do ? How could they be gentlemen ? But it is not necessary that Shanars should be discontented with their humble faith. It serves them to keep the devils in check and that is all they want. " Having no idea of God's government of the world, of rewards and punishments in a future state, or of the necessity of an atonement of their sins, they do not comprehend that Christianity is as necessary for them as for us, and that when the poor or illiterate reject it, they reject that which alone can make them, not only wise, but rich, and greedy for ever.

As the intellectual dullness of the Shanars is practically an obstacle to their reception of Christianity, so after they have become Christians it is a serious hindrance to their progress in the Christian life. In proportion as the power of apprehension is weak the sphere in which religious acts is contracted, its influence is diminished, and the development of its fruits is checked. Growth in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is an essential condition of growth in Grace. Grace is not a material influence, but a concomitant of the truth; and where the mind's utmost efforts scarcely enable it to grasp the first principles of the oracles of God, it will generally be found that Christian piety has not advanced beyond first principles. The spirit of wisdom and understanding is as necessary a gift of Grace as the spirit of God's holy fear; and they who do not or cannot add to their virtue knowledge will be sore hindered in running the race that is set before them. Hence, the intellectual deficiencies of the Shanars affect unfavorably their religious prospects; and without denying the operation of other causes, those deficiencies alone would suffice to account for much of the disparity apparent between their advancement in Christianity and that of the Christian converts in

primitive times. We read that the Apostles were often resisted and often despised, and that their teaching was often misrepresented through the hostility of the enemies of the truth; but we do not read that their teaching was ever unintelligible through the stupidity of their hearers alone. Viewed simply as compositions, the wonderful Epistles they wrote were not above the mental comprehension of the persons to whom they were addressed. On the contrary, texts and arguments were often cursorily alluded to, which the readers were expected to adduce and apply for themselves. On this ground, in some degree, the effects produced in the first ages by the preaching of Christianity as compared with the effects it now produces in Tinnevelly and in other portions of heathendom may be accounted for. Irrespective of the Jews to whom the Apostles preached, and their antecedent preparation for the reception of the Truth, how great a disparity is apparent, as regards intellectual preparation, between the heathens of Greece and Rome and our Tinnevelly Shanars, or indeed any heathens now to be found! Where shall we now meet with heathens so intellectual, so emotional, so aesthetic, so eager in the pursuit of truth, so capable of being impressed with the beauty, awed by the grandeur or melted by the sweetness of God's voice in His word. Why! their Christianity seems to have known no infancy whatever, but all at once they were born men in Christ. Surely we cannot expect any thing similar in the first generation, or even the second, of Christian Shanars. We cannot justly expect that a statue of clay or gypsum shall have the strength or the beauty, the durability or the polish of one of Carrara marble, though the design, the proportions, and the general effect be the same. Christianity does not alter men's minds prior to the reception of it. It cannot be responsible for the condition in which it finds them. But it is gratifying to know that, whatever be that condition, it improves and elevates it by sanctifying it. "The entrance of God's word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple;" and this is the ground of the hope we entertain in the poor Shanar's behalf.

Let no one suppose from any thing that has been said that Christianity is beyond the reach of the Shanar's intellect, or of that of any human being. They are capable of understanding its essential truths when unartificially and popularly stated. They are capable of believing what they know, and practicing what they believe, and loving what they practise. As far as I can judge from appearances, the most consistently pious Christian in my district is a person who cannot read. Knowing little else, he appears to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent; and there are not a few in Tinnevelly who like him find the most necessary truths the clearest. " Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved ;" - this germ of Christian doctrine is as clear to the Shanars as to us. On the other hand, the logical development of this germ in the Epistle to the Romans - the explanation of the principles of the connexion subsisting between faith and salvation, and indeed all explanations of grounds and reasons, are beyond the comprehension of the majority of them. A mere statement of facts satisfies the mind of the uninquiring; the more cultivated mind is convinced and converted by the principles which those facts embody. " Milk " is thus provided for " babes ;" as well as " strong meat for them that are of full age." And hence when we find a people who, like the Shanars, are children in understanding, it is well to remember that out of the mouths of children God hath perfected praise; that with the rudiments of knowledge He can confer the rudiments of saving grace; and that it is not the amount of a man's gifts, but the use he makes of them, not the number of talents committed to him, but the proportion of his gains, that commends him to his lord. Still, it holds true that they who have received ten talents and gained other ten will stand, absolutely at least, in a higher position than they who have received five and gained other five. " To him that hath shall be given ;" and this is God's rule both in Nature and in Grace. As European Christians, we have reason to thank God for many " good and perfect gifts " of special love; but the Shanars have also reason to thank Him for His merciful condescension to their

low estate. He condescended to the lowly, when He assumed man's nature, and He still condescends to the lowly when He makes the faintest glimpse of divine knowledge and " faith like a grain of mustard seed " available for a Shanar's salvation.

It is gratifying to perceive the efficacy of Christian education in improving the mental as well as the moral condition of the Shanars. Though even the educated are very deficient in intelligence, yet it is unquestionable that there is a marked contrast in many particulars between them and the uneducated. I do not mean, and no person of reflection will suppose, that all the educated youth are necessarily superior to all their uneducated seniors in integrity of character, in the desire of improvement or even in real mental enlightenment. In the majority of cases however their superiority is immense, as regards their power of comprehension and their power of expression, their ability to follow the service with intelligence and understand sermons, and their perception of the force of arguments and persuasions. Their education, such as it is, has given us access to their minds; and hence its value, when compared with the total ignorance of the majority and their consequent unimpressibility, is incalculably great. And if we do not see all the results we look for now we shall, by God's blessing, see them hereafter.

If it were our main object to make the pupils in our schools logical reasoners, we might give up the task in despair. We can teach every branch of study more successfully than the art of thinking. But the grand object of education we give is rather a moral than an intellectual one. Others may aim at the heart through the intellect; we aim at the intellect through the heart. We hope, it is true, to awaken their thinking powers; but this hope is subordinate to, and included in, our hope of leading their souls to Christ. In many cases, especially in our seminaries and boarding schools, the pupils are acquainted not only with the letter, but, to some extent, with the spirit of God's word. Their hands are furnished with weapons, and their young minds trained for the

spiritual conflict. Nothing now is required but faith to enable them to rise and conquer; and " faith is the gift of God."

Suppose this apparatus of Christian teaching and training continued in operation for at least another generation ; suppose -- a supposition which will probably soon be realized -- the entire mass of the native Christians in Tinnevelly, men and women, with few or rare exceptions, able to read God's word; and a large proportion of them persons who had been trained in our boarding schools, and consequently accustomed to attention and reflection, to observation and deduction -- accustomed to act on higher principles than the rue of the caste and custom; suppose also that a goodly number of these have added " to virtue godliness," and spiritual to intellectual life; and who can calculate the degree in which it may please God to raise this entire race, mentally as well as morally ?

5. There is another peculiarity in the Shanar mind which may briefly be noticed as influencing their moral condition and prospects, especially with respect to their reception of Christianity.

Partly through their indolent submission to custom, and partly through their inability to think for themselves, and their timidity, their habits of mind are " gregarious " beyond those of any people I know. Solitary individuals amongst them rarely adopt any new opinion, or any new course of procedure. They follow the multitude to do evil, and they follow the multitude to do good. They think in herds. Hence individuals and single families rarely are found to relinquish heathenism and join the Christian Church. They wait till favourable circumstances influence the minds of their relatives or neighbours; and then they come in a body. In like manner, if through any cause a new learner should wish to return to heathenism, he generally waits till he can succeed in engaging on his side the sympathies of a portion of the congregation.

When single individuals or families embrace Christianity, their apostasy is of comparatively rare occurrence; as in the very fact of their acting on their own convictions, without waiting for

others, they have proved themselves possessed of an independent judgment and strength of will. This gregarious disposition appears in the after life of the majority of the converts. It is inconceivably difficult to induce individuals to take a single unaccustomed step alone. But when a movement has commenced, very little effort is required to induce them to join in it and swim with the stream. In general they join it of their own accord, and would feel lonely and helpless if left behind.

It is now time to bring to a close this sketch of the religion and the moral condition and prospects of the Shanars. The description I have given of the general characteristics of the class, especially of their demonolatry and its consequences, will enable the English reader to form a tolerably correct idea of the condition of the heathens and the prospects of Christianity in Tinnevelly. The picture may be a gloomier one than was anticipated ; but I am sure that it is an impartial, faithful, truthful one. And if the exhibition of it tend to deepen in any mind its abhorrence of the devil and his works, or excite it to more compassionate love and more generous exertion in behalf of souls which Christ died to save, and which are perishing for lack of knowledge, one great end I have had in view will be gained.

It is always satisfactory to know what it is with which we are contending; what are its powers and resources; and what are the results which may fairly be anticipated. It has been our lot in Tinnevelly to suffer from the exaggerations of both friends and foes; and it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to refute the one without appearing to give a triumph to the other. I hope I have done better than refute either by furnishing facts and stating principles for the guidance of the Christian enquirer. I have neither attacked nor defended. It has been my desire neither to blacken the picture by prejudice, nor to " say smooth things and prophecy deceits. " I have endeavoured to illustrate the nature of the

superstitions and moral evils which Christianity has to supplant in this province, the characteristics and capacity of the classes with whom, we have to deal, the facilities and hindrances to the progress of Christianity which are involved in the circumstances of the people, and the nature of the trials or encouragements with which the Missionaries meet. It cannot do harm to throw light on the condition of the people whom we are endeavouring to christianize. The exclusion of romantic sentiment may prevent disappointment hereafter, and will, I trust, have the effect of rousing to our aid principles of infinitely greater strength, durability, and value. I confess that in the picture I have drawn there seems to me nothing which is likely to interest the merely natural mind. " The wise man, the scribe, the disputor of this world ," the political economist, the merchant, the seeker after the picturesque , would find nothing suitable to their purposes amongst the Shanars. Worldly men seeking to accomplish their worldly objects, or aiming at benevolent objects in a worldly spirit, would abandon so degraded a people to their fate. But they who " know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He were rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich," will not - cannot act so merciless a part.

Difficulties in Christ's cause, and in the cause of man's welfare should only serve to kindle zeal. The more debasing the superstitions, the more depraved the morals, the deeper the poverty and indolence and stupidity of the people whom we wish to christianize, as the difficulties increase, so should our determination to meet and master the difficulties rise higher and higher. Having a Lord All-mighty as our Leader and Commander, and the truths we endeavour to diffuse being a sufficient remedy for all the evils of society in every clime, why should we doubt of a victorious result? He maketh His strength " perfect in weakness; " and never is this more manifest than when " the weak things of the world and the things that are despised " are the objects of our labors of love. If there be any who think the Shanars beneath their

attention – too low in the social scale to be worth raising, too depraved to be worth saving, whomsoever they may be like. I am sure they are not like God. Though infinitely great, He does not despise the little. He came down from heaven to save lost man; and never can men more resemble Him than when they carry, or help to carry to poor, dull-witted, hardened ; abandoned heathens the knowledge of His saving grace.

Besides, who are we that we should despise the Shanars, or hesitate to convey to them the blessings of Christianity ? Let us " look at the rock whence we were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence we were digged. " When the Shanars were, as they are now, a settled, a peaceable, and an industrious people, our ancestors were illiterate, shivering savages, or wandering robbers; and had not that grace which bringeth salvation arrested them, notwithstanding their high organization and advantages of climate, the race might have remained savage to the present day. It is the Lord's grace alone that has made us to differ. And why should not the same grace elevate the Shanars ? They might not rise to the same height – for God giveth His Spirit " by measure; " and that measure accords only with the counsel of His will; and, besides, the physical circumstances of the Shanars are inferior to those of our forefathers, -- but why should it not raise them proportionately as much above their present state, both in mind and in heart, as it raised the Angles, the Jutes, and Saxons above theirs ? If the change from the worship of Hertha – mother earth – to the worship of the Lord from heaven produced such mighty results, why may not similar results be produced by the change from the worship of devils to the worship of " the One living and true God ? "

It cannot be alleged of the Shanars, as of many other castes and classes in India, that they are fenced round by priestcraft and prejudice, and apparently inaccessible to Christian influence. On the contrary, they are peculiarly free from prejudice, and peculiarly accessible. Without priests ; without a written religious code ; without sacred traditions; without historic

recollections ; without that aversion to Christianity as a foreign religion which other classes evince ; the chief obstacle to their evangelization is the density of their ignorance. They have always been found more willing to embrace Christianity , and after they have embraced it more willing to be guided , controlled , and moulded by its principles , than any other class ; and the number of this one caste that have placed themselves under Christian instruction is greater than that of all the other converts in India , in connexion with all Protestant Missions. God has opened " a wide and effectual door " for the diffusion of His Gospel amongst them ; and that Gospel is now the religion of thousands of them in the same sense in which it is , locally and professedly , the religion of the people of England. Already nearly 40,000 souls in Tinnevelly alone, in connection with the Church Missionary Society and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel , and about 20,000 souls in South Travancore, in connexion with the London Missionary Society, have abandoned the demonolatry received by tradition from their fathers. It is true that serious defects may be detected in the character and temper of most of the Shanar converts – defects which Christianity must remove ; but , whatever may be the defects which mingle with their profession , it is certainly , for India , a remarkable thing that so large a number of this class should have embraced Christianity. Should we not consider this fact as a special call of Providence to occupy and cultivate fully this so peculiar sphere ? It is not in a dream that our aid is besought. Thousands upon thousands of living men and women , calling themselves by the same holy name wherewith we are called , invite us to " come over and help them " to become worthy of that name.

The Shanars of Tinnevelly have for nearly fifty years been our fellow-subjects ; and during the whole of that period they have considered their subjection to the East India Company's Government and the introduction of the rudiments of English Law as priceless blessings. No insurrections , no riotous insubordination ,

no disloyalty , have ever been laid to their charge. Though taxed , like all Hindus , under all successive Governments , beyond their ability , more submissive tax-payers are no where to be met with in the world. They gladly allow that the feeling of security , and the certainty of obtaining justice when they have an European to appeal to , are an ample compensation for the weight of taxation imposed upon them. Now if our nation has profited by their " temporal things ; " - if of the 30 lakhs of Rupees, or thereabouts , collected as revenue in Tinnevelly , by far the larger portion has year after year been sent out of the Province , for the advantage of European officials and proprietors of India stock , or as a contribution towards the expense of the military government of less submissive races , is it reasonable that they should receive at our hands educational advantages and " spiritual good things " in exchange. Notwithstanding their poverty they are not thought too poor to be taxed ; notwithstanding their stupidity and debasement they are not thought unworthy of the benefits of English rule ; why then should they not be thought equally worthy of the light of knowledge and the blessings of Religion ? Though it is not expected or desired that the Government should teach them Christianity, it might justly be expected that it should teach them to read and write , -- that it should endeavour to raise them in intelligence , or at least in material civilization. But our well-meaning Christian Government has done infinitely less for the improvement of the condition of its subjects in any respect, whether intellectually or socially , or even materially , than it could do , and was bound to do. It has ever been well content to " sit at the receipt of custom ," and commit to private benevolence the duty of promoting the welfare of the people. It appoints, on an average, only one European Magistrate for the administration of justice amongst 2,00,000 souls ; one Engineer Officer for the construction of public works (that is , works directly conducive to the increase of the revenue) for every 8,00,000 souls ; and for the millions upon millions of souls forming the population of the Madras Presidency , exclusive of the city of Madras itself , not one

schoolmaster –not even one. It punishes the subjects when they violate the law, but not a Rupee does it expend in teaching the masses of the agricultural populace to read and understand the law. It considers it its duty , or finds it conducive to its interests , to give a superior education to a few of its own officials ; but the Shanars and the rest of the laboring classes are too low in the scale of caste importance to be thought worthy of Government employment , and therefore too low to expect to receive any instruction from the Government. Hence , except European Christians , moved by compassion and Christian charity , extend to them the benefits of Christianity , and of religious and secular education , it is not likely that they will ever be taught a single letter. *

In pleading for the continuance and increase of Christian effort in behalf of the Shanars ,I do not desire that any efforts to educate and evangelize the higher castes and the inhabitants of the large towns should cease. Nor indeed is there any need to fear that those classes will be neglected ; for the schools of the Scottish Missions , established for the benefit of those classes alone , have always excited a larger degree of public interest than any other department of Missionary labor. It is certainly natural and proper that those excellent Institutions should receive special sympathy and support. The influential position and the superior intelligence of the class to which the pupils belong ; their thirst for knowledge and aptness to learn , their

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* *It must however be mentioned in connection with the above statement that the Tanjore Mission receives a monthly allowance of Rs. 350 in support of Protestant Schools. A grant for this purpose was originally made to Schwartz who rendered eminent services to the Government , and was increased on the petition of the late Mr. Kohlhoff to the present amount ; the Court of Directors being satisfied , to quote their own letter " that the conduct and spirit of the Tanjore Mission had proved beneficial to the natives and*

tended to conciliate them to our Government." At Madura also a Catechist has for some time past been paid by Government, though on the death or removal of the present incumbent of the office the allowance is to cease. In strict accuracy it is right to mention these facts of which our friend the author was not aware, though they scarcely affect his statement.-- EDITOR (of original version).

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vivacity and bright looks; the communication of instruction in English enabling English visitors to take a personal interest in the tuition; and the high gifts and singleness of mind for which the teachers are so remarkable :-- those throw a halo of interest round such institutions which cannot be expected in favor of equally necessary, but less brilliant efforts, in behalf of black, dull country children, and their blacker, duller parents. The more pleasing the path of duty can be made, and the more the eye, and the ear, and the imagination can be enlisted on its side, the greater number will be found to patronize it. So far all is well. But whilst this department of Christian duty is attended to, I plead that our endeavours to evangelize the Shanars and Agricultural classes should not be allowed to relax. Shall works of charity be done only in the sunshine? shall exclusion from grace be the punishment of having dull eyes and hard hands? It is said " open thy mouth for the dumb;" and I but fulfil this command by pleading in behalf of the Shanars that the voice of their necessities, their preparedness for Christianity, and their readiness to receive it, be listened to. I plead that the hundreds in the Presidencies should not intercept from the tens of thousands in the country their just share of educational and religious advantages; that whilst Government employees are well cared for, the producers of the country's food should not be abandoned to their fate. Should Christianity confine herself to large towns? Should the *pagani* be condemned to be pagans for ever? Have not the Shanars and Pariars and the rest of the labouring classes souls to be saved, or

lost, as well as the wealthy? It is the glory of Christianity that out of weakness she is made strong, and that she chooses " the weak things of the world, and the things that are despised, yea and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are." Let us not then " mind high things, but condescend to men of low estate ; " remembering the words of the Lord Jesus: -- go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to *every creature.*"

It is an error also to suppose that any change in the opinions of a few of the wealthy, intellectual inhabitants of the Presidency and the other great towns is likely to influence the minds of the country poor, hundreds of miles off. Opinions do not circulate amongst the Hindus so readily or so rapidly as in England. Sometimes a mere report will take half a year to travel from the Presidency to Cape Comorin. Opinions also do not as in England extend equably from class to class, but only circulate with a gyratory motion within the caste in which they originated. Ordinarily the enlightenment and evangelization of one class produces scarcely any perceptible effect upon others. It is *the custom* for every caste and class to have prejudices and practices of its own; and it is *not the custom* for any caste or class to imitate or borrow from its neighbours. Consequently every caste, or at least every circle of castes, must be made the object of special Christian effort. The high castes in the towns cannot be reached but by the instrumentality of superior English schools. Consequently, those schools form a part, and an essential one, of the entire apparatus of Indian Missions. The Shanars, and the agricultural classes generally, cannot be reached but by a parochial system of village congregations and village schools, such as has been established and is in operation in Tinnevelly. I plead therefore that this department of Missionary labor be considered as equally important, and supported, in proportion to the number of the stations and the extent of the area occupied, with an equal measure of zeal.

Our hope of the elevation of these tribes must solely depend upon the extension and enlargement of our own Missions.

The Romanists have had in Tinnevelly for ages a Missionary establishment, and numerous congregations ; and the entire caste of Paraver fishermen belong to the Roman Church. But the genius of Romanism is unfavourable to improvement. The work of introducing the elements of education amongst Xavier's converts has not yet been commenced, and not so much as one Chapter of the New Testament has been translated into Tamil during the three hundred years that have elapsed since the Romish Missions were established ! ! Consequently, it may not only be asserted but proved , to the satisfaction of every candid inquirer, that in intellect, habits , and morals the Romanist Hindus do not differ from the heathens in the smallest degree. Every person of any information is aware of the difference between the Romanism of Portugal and Italy and the intellectual, idealized, polished Romanism of England. But the Romanism found in India is in a still greater degree inferior to the Italian and Portuguese Romanism. Even the French, from whose national character a more enlightened and reforming spirit might have been expected, have failed to banish heathen usages, or introduce practical reforms, amongst the congregations from which they expelled the Portuguese priests. The French Jesuits, instead of endeavouring to raise the Hindus to their own level, have sunk to their's . They have adopted not only the dress, manners, and mode of life, but even the caste prejudices and low predilections of the people they came to improve. This course may have gained for them the attachment of the Hindus ; but it has forfeited their respect. How can they respect persons who sink from a high civilization to their own low, grovelling level ; who copy where they should teach, and obey where they should command ; who neither establish schools, nor instruct adults, but content themselves with performing masses and heading processions by torch-light ? In consequence of these things Romanism, as actually existing in these parts, is powerful only for the perpetuation of evil. It makes no converts from heathenism, and is considered by heathens themselves as a heathenish ally. Irrespective of the progressive genius of Protestantism ,the intense, unbending nationality of the

Anglo-Saxons, whether English or Americans, preserve them from so degrading a course ; and in consequence, whether as colonists, or as teachers of religion, they prove themselves infinitely more efficient than the flexible French, or the retrograde Portuguese and Italians.

The only Protestant Missions established in Tinnevelly are those of the Church Missionary Society and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel - Societies work harmoniously for the accomplishment of a common end ; each in its own circle of districts.

The Missions of the latter Society comprise six districts, with a Christian population of about 10,000 souls ; each district having its circuit of village congregations, its boarding and day schools, its Catechists, Readers, and Schoolmasters, and its resident Missionary Clergyman ; and the whole provided with a central Seminary for the training up of an efficient native agency. Unquestionably this is a noble apparatus of Christian benevolence, which deserves to be maintained in efficiency ; and notwithstanding the peculiar hindrances and discouragements with which the work is beset, its results are such as not only to warrant but to call for its extension and enlargement.

God grant that we never halt in this worthy enterprize till our efforts be rewarded with complete success - till the evangelization of this entire race of idolaters and demonolaters become one of the " many crowns " which encircle the Redeemer's brow. And what is required for the accomplishment of this object, but the continuance and extension of the apparatus already employed, and which has already produced such encouraging fruits, with the continuance of the blessing of the most High God ? Let there be an increase in the number of laborers connected with this and its sister Society proportionate to the greatness of the enterprise, the encouraging openings for usefulness which God is from time to time revealing, and the position, responsibility, and

means of the Anglican Church; let the Missionary Societies in Tinnevelly be enabled to teach the elements of Christian truth to every adult who is willing to learn, and bestow upon every learner the benefits of pastoral guidance and control; to train up every child of Christian parents in the knowledge of God's holy word and in the moral restraints and religious influences of a Christian education; and to establish in every village where Christians reside the visible organization of Christ's holy Church by the administration of the sacraments and the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline;-- let an adequate number of faithful Missionaries be sent forth to preach among these Gentiles " the unsearchable riches of Christ " --- Christ crucified, as the fountain of pardon and life --- Christ risen, as the hope of glory; " warning every man and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; " and withal let prayer be continually made to the God of all Grace that He would shower down His blessing upon His servants and their work, like rain upon these arid sands, -- like rivers in this thirsty ground; and the time will come -- will speedily come, --- when the Church's prayer shall be heard, when she shall see the fruit of her anxieties, and labors -- her alms, and patience, and faith, and when " a new song shall be put into her mouth, even praise unto our God."

All things betoken this result, and all things work together for its accomplishment. " Darkness still covereth the land, and gross darkness the people; " but let not any one despond; it is the darkness which precedes the dawn. " The morning appeareth upon the mountains, " and " joy cometh in the morning. "
